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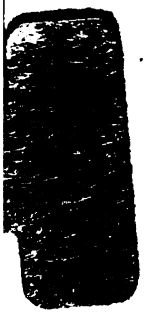

WITH THE RUSSIANS IN MANCHURIA

WITH THE RUSSIANS
IN
MANCHURIA

BY

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CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
	PREFACE	ix
I.	MOSCOW	1
II.	MOSCOW TO KHARBIN	14
III.	KHARBIN AND MUKDEN	33
IV.	LIAOYANG TO TA-SHI-CHIAO	57
V.	THE RETREAT FROM HAICHEN	84
VI.	DAVANTIENTUNG	98
VII.	THE BATTLE OF LIAOYANG	114
VIII.	THE RETREAT FROM LIAOYANG	134
IX.	THE BATTLE OF SHA-HO	146
X.	POUTILOFF'S HILL	171
XI.	NOTES ON THE RUSSIAN ARMY	18
XII.	GENERAL IMPRESSIONS	195

PREFACE

THE following notes will have no value for the military expert or the serious student of war. They are merely the jottings of the fleeting impressions of an ignorant and bewildered civilian who drifted for a little while like a piece of weed to and fro on the shifting eddies and currents of the great stream of war. More competent judges will explain the causes and effects, the true value and signification of the historic events, of which I was to a certain degree a spectator.

All I can hope to do is to give a faint shadow of the pictures that have imprinted themselves on my memory, glimpses and sidelights into the war, such as one obtains at a railway station by putting a penny in the slot of a small machine. As is the case with such pictures, the colours will probably seem blurred and the outlines hazy with vibration, but I shall be satisfied if the play of life is in any way caught and reproduced.

I was riding one day last September between two villages in the tract of rich country which lies to the south-west of Sin-min-tin, with an escort of Cossacks. The man who rode beside me asked me

if I was a doctor. I said I was a war correspondent. He remained pensive for a while, and he then explained to me the nature and the first cause of war correspondents in the following terms: "War correspondents," he said, "are people who are sent to see that neither side *add* anything." He meant that war correspondents were there to check the military authorities, lest either side should invent a spurious exploit or an imaginary battle.

This, I suppose, is the ultimate cause of war correspondents. It is the reason why they are received, if not why they are sent; because, if this were not so, it is inconceivable that the military authorities would be bothered with them.

Formerly the main object of the correspondent was to transmit news. Owing to the conditions of modern warfare, the rapid circulation of news, and the institution of the censorship, this, the correspondent's ostensible object, shines before him more like an Utopian dream than a concrete ambition which can be definitely realised. If, therefore, the military authorities are averse to the publication of news, and at the same time encourage or tolerate the presence of correspondents, I imagine the only reason of this can be that they desire the presence of impartial witnesses.

In the case of war such a thing is to be desired. A war between two modern nations can scarcely

help being the subject of much embittered controversy. This controversy is carried on more by invented and embellished fiction in the cities than by facts from the front.

During the South African war it happened to be my duty to read daily the news and opinions of a venomous newspaper called the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, which used to be the official organ of Prince Bismarck. This newspaper, with an infinite capacity for taking pains—which in this case certainly amounted to genius—whenever the facts seemed to favour the British arms, distorted them until disgrace oozed out of them; it, moreover, attacked the British with all the weapons of envy, hatred, and malice, with cheap ridicule, snarling sarcasm and subtle misrepresentation.

One wondered whether such stuff as this was to be the only record of the war to be made for the consumption of the German public. This was not the case. In spite of the fact that the German press was unanimously hostile and bitter towards England with regard to this question, during the last year the German official report of the war has appeared translated into English by Colonel Waters, in which the fancies of the German press are deprecated as baseless calumnies, and the facts are dispassionately revealed in their true shape.

This was owing to the presence during the war

of impartial witnesses, namely, the military attachés. Such men, it may be objected, are sufficient for the task of seeing that nothing be superadded to the facts. No doubt; but it is not always possible that their reports can be given to the public; they are, to a certain degree, fettered by various considerations; whereas the war correspondent at large—is free.

To go back to the *Hamburger Nachrichten*. When it was my misfortune to be obliged for professional reasons to soil my mind by reading the offensive arguments it expressed in a style unredeemed by any saving merit, I used to wonder whether, in the event of a Continental power being engaged in a similar war, our press would adopt such an ungenerous course of action. The occasion arose; it found us the allies of Japan, and naturally inclined to regard their side of the question with favour and that of her enemies from a more critical standpoint. Moreover, the exploits of the Japanese soldiers excited here, as they did in the Russian army, and in the rest of the world, an enthusiastic admiration that was justified and natural, but if it be asked whether our press—the press of a great nation, who had just come through a struggle with a small power, in the conduct of which there were episodes and incidents which proved that we had at least several motes, if not a beam, in our own eye—and during which

we had learnt to realise the unfairness and venomous falseness of foreign criticism—if it be asked whether our press, fresh from this lesson, eschewed the bad example, and showed a more generous and impartial spirit to a great power fallen on to evil days and evil tongues, just as we had done—the answer, I fear, is that the attitude of our press towards Russia was the same in kind as that of the Continental press towards us, if more sober and moderate in degree.

Therefore it is perhaps as well for the enlightenment of the purely unprejudiced and inquisitive minds who have no violent bias, who belong to no political or any other kind of party, who are affected neither by Russophobia or what the Shanghai newspapers call "Nippomania," that there should be on either side such things as war-correspondents, whose only object is to state what they saw and to point out the good as well as the bad side. Before starting for the war I went to the War Office at St Petersburg to obtain my papers, and had an interview with General Tzelebrovsky. "You will see bad things and good things," he said to me, "as happens in every war, but do not exclusively dwell on the bad things." During the war in South Africa, the Continental press, not satisfied with dwelling exclusively on the blacker side, painted it blacker still. I resolved, therefore, when I went to the war, that if I wrote about it then or afterwards I

would try and eschew the methods of the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, which seems to be incompatible with the manners and morals of what is called a civilised country. It is not, however, so very easy for an impartial voice to obtain credence in the face of strong prejudices. A great living thinker once said that the worst of a free country like England was the non-existence of any liberty of thought. You could do what you liked, but you could not express independent opinions without being labelled as a faddist, or a pro-Boer, or a bimetallist, or a vegetarian.

I think this is profoundly true. If one were to state that you do not necessarily see why England should be the enemy of Russia one would be labelled a pro-Russian, and it has been repeatedly explained by most newspapers that a pro-Russian is the same thing as a pro-Boer, an enemy of the Empire.

For this reason, before I begin this short record of my experiences in the Far-East, I wish to state that, although I feel no inborn hatred of Russia, and think, on the contrary, as an English merchant who had lived forty years in Russia said to me in the train on my way home, that "they are very fine fellows"—whatever their faults may be—I wish to state, in order to reassure our rigid guardians of our public morality, the inspired oracles of our national conscience, that I am neither a pro-Boer nor even a

liberal, but a mere observer, who, having lived and travelled a certain amount abroad, has been able to form some sort of comparative estimate—however inadequate—of the relative values of foreign notions and insular prejudices.

WITH THE RUSSIANS IN MANCHURIA

CHAPTER I

MOSCOW

WHEN I started from Moscow everything was going in that city much the same as usual. The most interesting thing in Moscow at the present day, if you have heard the services and the glorious bass-singing at the Cathedral of the Assumption and at St Saviour's, is one particular theatre which is worth mentioning in any book connected with Russian affairs, because it is a sign of the times, not only artistically but politically, and exercises a considerable influence. People are in the habit of saying that in Russia there is no middle class. I cannot conceive what they mean. Mr Norman in his book states that there is no middle class in Russia. It must have escaped his notice; but it exists none the less, and it includes the professional class, the world of doctors, lawyers, professors, teachers, artists, the higher and middle merchant class, and besides these (a fact which is not realised), nine-tenths of the officials, and since

the introduction of compulsory military service two-thirds, if not three-quarters, of the officers. Most of the generals now in Manchuria, including Generals Kouropatkin and Sacharoff, belong to this class. It not only exists, but it is enormously important, since it calls itself the "intelligentsia," and does in fact number among its constituents nearly all the "intellectuals" of Russia and all that is most advanced in the world of science, literature, and philosophy. Dostoievski belonged to this class; but perhaps its most characteristic and representative spokesman and portrayer is an author who died last year, and whose death was mourned with sorrow by hundreds of Russians even in the wilds of Manchuria, namely, Anton Tchekoff. He is famous as a writer of short stories portraying the life of the middle classes in Russia with the same accuracy and insight with which Tolstoi depicted the upper classes and Gogol the officials of a past generation. Some of Tchekoff's most successful work was written for the stage; it has been acted with care and exquisite art; the result is that it has been triumphantly successful; and it has given voice perhaps more than anything else during the last ten years to the feelings, aspirations, disappointments, the hopes, fears, and disbelieving of the educated Russian people. For that reason it is important and interesting to any one who is following

Russian affairs at this moment. Tchekoff's plays are acted at a theatre called the Artistic Theatre at Moscow. This theatre was started originally about four years ago as a company of well-to-do amateurs, under the leadership of M. Stanislavski. They began by acting Sullivan's *Mikado* for fun, and continued acting for their pleasure, and resolved to spare neither trouble nor expense in making their performances as perfect as possible. They took a theatre and gave performances for nothing or next to nothing, but their success was so instantaneous and so great, their public so affluent, that by degrees they were obliged to take a new theatre, charge higher prices, and at the present time they form what is certainly the best all-round company of Russia, if not of Europe. It resembles the Théâtre Antoine of Paris, both as regards the quality of the acting and the kind of plays acted and the extraordinary attention which is paid to detail.

The acting has an advantage over that of the French School in being more natural. The character of the plays acted is curious, if not unique, on the European stage. The clash of events in them is subservient to the human figure, and the human figure itself is subservient to the atmosphere in which the figures are plunged.

The *répertoire* of the theatre is varied, and includes *Julius Cæsar*, Gorki's *Lowest Depths*, Haupt-

mann's *Lonely Lives*, and works of Ibsen and Tolstoi; but by far the most interesting work produced is that of Anton Tchekoff, from the fact that his plays faithfully reflect, with far greater fidelity and less exaggeration than is the case with Gorki, the soul of the Russian people at the present day. This is also the reason of the great popularity of the plays; for never did plays contain less action, less "clash of wills," less *scènes-à-faire*, or any of those things which are supposed to be essential to dramatic success. They are enough to make Sarcey turn in his grave. And the success, it must not be forgotten, is substantial, concrete, and financial, and not one of esteem. It is difficult to get expensive places, even some days beforehand, for a Tchekoff play. His work resembles both in its character and in the character of its success that of Mr Bernard Shaw, minus the paradox and the extravagance. He is a kind of serious Bernard Shaw not without humour, but with the Gilbertian humour and fantasy left out. His importance is, as I said before, more than artistic; it is political—although politics are never directly mentioned in his plays. Their importance lies in the fact that no influence can be more effectual than that of the stage, especially in troublous times. "Organise the theatre," Matthew Arnold said, "the theatre is irresistible." Well, the theatre is almost the only thing in Russia which is organised, and it

is very well organised indeed. Its effect, therefore, can be exceedingly great. Tchekoff never mentions politics; but what he leaves unsaid, what he suggests is far more potent and effectual than any number of harangues or polemical discussion. He shows the Russian soul crying out in the desert; he shows the hopelessness, the straining after impossible ideals, the people who have been longing for the dawn, and condemned to the twilight chiefly owing to their own weakness. He shows the difficulty of solving questions and the heart-sickness of those who think about it, in exactly the same way Mr Shaw shows the difficulty of dealing with the Irish question in *John Bull's Other Island.*

I will give a short analysis of one of his most successful plays—*Uncle Vania.* The play deals with scenes of country life, and the thread of action which connects these scenes is of the slightest.

We are introduced into the world of the well-to-do upper middle class, the class corresponding to that with which Ibsen deals. Someone once defined Ibsen's characters as a pack of shopkeepers wrangling over an antimacassar, and his plays as an intolerable mixture of sordid bourgeoisie and hysteria. Tchekoff's characters are not sordid; hysterical some of them are, but their hysteria is interesting because there is reason for it. The reason being the profound discontent of the educated people with the manner in which they are governed,

a discontent so hopeless and insistent as to lead to hysteria.

The curtain rises on a garden; a well-to-do house with a terrace visible in the background. In the foreground a large table is laid for tea. But something in the aspect of the table leads one to think that the samovar has been waiting long; there is an air of great unpunctuality and vagueness about the whole place. It is three o'clock of an August afternoon, insufferably hot, dull, and sultry. Astroff, a country doctor, has been called to minister to Professor Vladimiroff, who is living in the house and suffers from gout. Astroff talks with an old woman servant, and in a few sentences reveals that he is suffering from "tedium vitæ." Towards the age of forty, said a cynic, men tire of honesty and women of virtue. Astroff is reaching that age. He is overworked and is sickened by the monotony, the labour, the squalor, and the seeming futility of a country doctor's existence.

Great attention is paid to details in this theatre, and by the way the doctor kills flies on his cheek, and other similar trifles, the sultry oppressiveness of the thundery day seems to reach us from over the footlights.

Voinitzki appears next—he is "Uncle Vania"—after whom the play is named. His position is as follows. His sister was the first wife of Professor

Vladimiroff. She died leaving an only daughter, Sonia. Voinitzki's father bought the estate in which the action takes place as a dowry for Sonia. Voinitzki renounced his claim to the succession in favour of Sonia, but his father in buying the estate was not able to pay the full sum due, and died leaving behind him a debt of 25,000 roubles. Professor Vladimiroff married a second time, a young and beautiful wife, Elena. Voinitzki undertook the administration of the estate, and with the help of his niece Sonia, in the course of ten years, paid off the debt left by his father. These business matters are revealed later on.

The situation at the beginning of Act I. is that the professor and his young wife have settled down on the estate. Two facts are plain, that Voinitzki is in a highly strung state of nervous excitement, and that his excitement is due to the professor. We gather that the professor resembles both as to situation and as to character Casaubon in *Middlemarch*. Indeed, throughout the play we are more than once reminded of *Middlemarch*. The professor's presence, Voinitzki tells Astroff, has had a disastrous effect on his manner of living and has introduced a general disorder into the household, for the professor often "breakfasts at five o'clock tea and dines on the following day." Yet we guess that it is something more than the professor's irregular habits which have excited Voinitzki to such a pitch.

In answer to Astroff's questions Voinitzki gives his views on the professor. He describes him as a dried-up biscuit, a learned fish, who lives on the estate of his first wife because he cannot afford to live in a town—a grumbler who has been undeservedly lucky, who after writing for twenty-five years is utterly unknown. Astroff suggests that Voinitzki envies him. Voinitzki admits it to the full, pointing to the miraculous way in which this piece of "diseased egoism" has attracted to it the "love o' women." No Don Juan, he says, ever had such success. His first wife adored him, and he inspired his mother-in-law with a lasting veneration verging on idolatry; his second wife gave him her youth and beauty. All have believed in him and slaved for him.

We afterwards learn that Voinitzki slaved for him also, because he believed in him. "What for?" he asks bitterly, and "Why?" Elena, Sonia, and Voinitzki's mother make their appearance. The professor is seen walking in the garden in an overcoat and goloshes, in spite of the heat, and from the conversations which take place until the end of the first act we see that Sonia is in love with Astroff, and would make him an admirable wife. We see that Sonia is an admirable character, but unfortunately devoid of beauty and all charm. We see that Voinitzki is in love with Elena, that Elena's interest has been awakened in Astroff, and that she herself

is a kind of land mermaid, a middle-class Pagan, not immoral but amoral; a passionless Cleopatra, a good-natured Mary Stuart, a well-meaning Circe; one of those half-sentimental, half-sensuous creatures who give nothing and yet are well content that all who surround them should be spell-bound by the aroma of their personality, while they maintain, even to themselves, the theory that they are intensely harmless and respectable.

Practically nothing happens in the second act. We see quite clearly that Sonia is in love with Astroff, and that he is unaware and careless of the fact; that Voinitzki, more nervous than ever, pursues Elena in vain with his advances; yet in spite of this want of action the attention of the audience is riveted. We are made to feel Astroff's hopelessness at the life of a country doctor in Russia; the ploughing of sands, the physical disgust, and still greater, the moral sickness at the evils which he is powerless to remedy. I often heard the doctors in the war talk exactly in the strain in which Astroff talks in this play. It is not the suffering we encounter which depresses us, they used to say, but the evils which should be instantly remedied, and cannot be remedied, and which are partly inherent in the very character of the people.

We are also made to feel the atmosphere reigning in the house, and emanating from the characters of its inmates. The effect, as Astroff says, is one of

suffocation—the professor with his gout and books, Voinitzki a bundle of nerves and hypochrondria, Elena who merely eats, sleeps, and walks about, shedding the intoxicating influence of her beauty, languorous and soft, herself as empty of true substance as a sachet.

In the third act Sonia confesses her love for Astroff to Elena, and asks her to find out if her case is hopeless, and if so, to persuade him to cease from visiting the house. Elena reveals the situation to him in a few delicate hints. He looks at her with amazement, and then adopts a tone of cynical brutality. "If you had told me that two months ago," he says, "all might have been different, but now you know very well why and on account of whom I have come here day after day: for a whole month I have given up everything for you, and this has delighted you." Elena plays the part of injured innocence; he takes her in his arms and kisses her. At that moment Voinitzki enters and witnesses the scene.

A moment or two afterwards the professor arrives. He has summoned the family to talk business. They all enter and sit down, and the professor makes a speech, prefacing it with the remark that he is not a practical man—a speech in which he proposes that the estate should be sold, and that he should buy a small country house in Finland with the proceeds. Voinitzki interrupts him with violence, and in an

ever-increasing crescendo of fury cries out that the professor, who says he is a child in these matters, wishes to turn him out after his ten years of slavery, and to sell Sonia's estate. "You have ruined my life," he cries. "You are my worst enemy; I know what course to take," and he rushes out of the room. The professor follows shortly. A pistol shot is heard. Voinitzki has fired on the professor. The professor returns, calling on all to stop Voinitzki. Voinitzki enters again, and fires at the professor, but misses him a second time.

The action of the fourth act can be stated in a few words. The professor and his wife leave the house. Astroff goes back to his practice, leaving Voinitzki and Sonia to resume their quiet life of regular work. And yet in saying this I have omitted all that is important in this act, which is the most striking of the four, and impresses the audience the most deeply. It takes place in Voinitzki's room. On one side of the stage is his sitting-room, on the other what serves for the office of the estate. It is an autumn evening. Astroff and Elena take leave of one another. "I wish to beg one thing of you," she says to him—"to respect me." He smiles derisively. She is just that kind of woman who would like to have what can only be gained by loss of respect and yet be respected.

"If you had stayed here longer," says Astroff,

"I should have been a ruined man and you . . . would not have improved. Well, you are going. . . . Let me kiss you . . . to say good-bye. . . . Yes? (kisses her). Now . . ." Elena (going to the door): "I wish you all possible happiness. (She returns and flings herself in his arms; they then hurriedly break away from each other.) It is time to go." Astroff: *Finita la comedia.*

The professor enters with Voinitzki, Sonia, and his mother-in-law, and bids good-bye. He then leaves the house with his wife. The others go to see them off. Voinitzki and Astroff are left alone. The bells of the horses are heard outside. One after another, Sonia, the mother-in-law, and the old woman servant enter the room saying: "They've gone!" Described, this appears to be insignificant; seen, acted as it is with incomparable naturalness, it is indescribably effective. In this scene a particular mood, which we have all felt, is captured and rendered; a certain chord is struck which exists in all of us: that kind of "toothache at heart" which we feel when a sudden parting takes place and we are left behind. The parting need not necessarily be a sad one. But the tenor of our life is interrupted. As a rule the leaves of life are turned over so quickly and noiselessly by Time that we are not aware of the process. In the case of a sudden parting we hear the leaf of life turn over and fall back into the great blurred book of the

past, read, finished, and irrevocable. It is this hearing of the turning leaf which Tchekoff has rendered merely by three people coming into the room one after another and saying, "They've gone!"

The intonation with which the old servant said "They've gone"—an intonation of peculiar cheerfulness with which servants love to underline what is melancholy—was marvellous. Finally Astroff goes. Voinitzki's mother reads a pamphlet by the lamp-light, the clatter of the horses' hoofs and the jingling of bells are heard dying away in the distance, and Voinitzki and Sonia set to work at their accounts, and the infinite monotony of their life begins once more.

The play is received at every performance by the audience, although it has been played nearly a hundred times, with boundless enthusiasm.

CHAPTER II

MOSCOW TO KHARBIN

I STARTED from Moscow on my journey across the plains on the 2nd May. The trains were running four times a week as in times of peace, as they are at present. There were seven officers on board the train, a few officials, and two war correspondents, besides myself, Lord Brooke, Reuter's correspondent, M. de la Salle of the *Agence Havas*, and Mr Hamilton of the *Manchester Guardian*. I made the acquaintance of the officers, who were friendly in the extreme. There was, however, in this paradise a snake in the shape of a merchant from Vladivostock, who, I was told, was fabulously rich. His avocations lead him to read the English newspapers. He was consequently appalled by the fact that representatives of the *Morning Post* and Reuter's Agency were going to the seat of war. Reuter's Agency, he told me, was the worst. Reuter's Agency he invested with just the same Machiavellic and mysterious qualities with which a certain section of the French during the Dreyfus case attributed to that terrible intangible "Syndicat."

The chief object of the Agency was, he told me, to ruin Russia. With this purpose it was sending to all parts of the world professional liars, men of unbridled fancy, complete unscrupulousness, with unlimited wealth at their disposal, who were to poison the currents of popular opinion at all their sources.

He evidently instilled his ideas into the heads of the officers, who were simple-minded men. (I met several of them later on), and after a time a marked coolness in their manner became visible. The suspecting man of commerce prophesied that we should not be allowed to go farther than Irkutsk, and I imagine the result of his suspicions was that a telegram was sent somewhere, either to Kharbin or St Petersburg, to know who we were. All our papers were in order, and at Irkutsk we were allowed to continue our journey.

The journey struck one by its ease and rapidity, since when I started from London the impression prevailed that the railway would certainly be blown up, that trains fell into the half-frozen lakes, and that open railway trucks were the only form of accommodation.

As far as Irkutsk I travelled in the ordinary express, which has comfortable first and second-class carriages, a dining-room, a pianoforte, a bath-room, and a small library of Russian literature. The journey from Moscow to Irkutsk took nine

nights and eight days. Passenger trains consisting of first, second, and third-class carriages ran as usual from Irkutsk to Baikal Station. It was here that the real interest of the journey began. The lake was at that time crossed daily by two large ice-breakers, the *Baikal* and the *Angora*, which cleft through three feet of half-melted ice, the passage lasting four hours. Baikal Station is only a few hours' journey from Irkutsk. I arrived about one o'clock in the afternoon, and the steamer started at five.

As we left, the scene was one of the most strange and beautiful I have ever witnessed. It had been a glorious day, and the sun in the cold, clear atmosphere—an atmosphere that has a radiant purity which is quite indescribable—was gradually assuming the appearance of a red, fiery, arctic ball. In front of us was a silent sheet of ice, powdered with snow, white and spotless except for one long brown mark which had been made by the sledges. On the horizon in front of us a range of mountains was visible, whose summits seemed to disappear into a veil of snow made by the low-hanging clouds. It was impossible to discern where the mountains left off and where the clouds began; in fact, this low range had not the appearance of mountains at all; it seemed as if we were making for some mysterious island, some miraculous reef of sapphires, so intense was the blue of these hills, so gem-like

the way they glinted in the cold air. To the right was another still lower and more distant range; the intense deep blue faded here into a delicate and transparent sea-green—the colour of the transparent seas in the Greek islands—and these hills seemed like the phantom continuation of the other range—unearthly and filmy as a mirage.

As we moved the steamer ploughed the ice into flakes, which leapt and scattered themselves in innumerable spiral shapes, fantastic flowers of ice and snow. As the sun sank lower the strangeness and beauty increased, for a faint pink halo pervaded the sky round the sun, which grew more and more fiery and metallic. I knew that I had never seen anything like this before, and yet I felt at the same time that I was looking on something which I had already seen. I racked my brains, and suddenly I became aware of what was teasing my mind. It was the recollection of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*. The following lines came into my head:—

> "And now there came both mist and snow,
> And it grew wondrous cold:
> And ice, mast-high, came floating by
> As green as emerald."

It was "wondrous cold," and here in the distance seemed to be the ice as "green as emerald." Above us was the sun "no bigger than the moon," and as we ploughed through the ice which "crackled and

growled" like "noises in a swound," I felt we might have been the first that ever burst into that "silent sea."

As the sun sank the whole sky was suffused with a pink glow, and the distant mountains seemed like ghostly caverns of ice.

It was too cold to stay on deck and enjoy the beauty with any comfort, and one took refuge in the comfortable cabin, where an excellent dinner was ready. We arrived at eight o'clock; it was dark, and the other ice-breaker was starting on its return journey to the strains of military music.

I resumed my train journey about eleven o'clock at night. The train was so full that it was impossible not only to get a seat in the first or second class, but at first it seemed doubtful whether one would obtain a place of any kind in the train. On realising the situation I had jumped into a third-class carriage, which was at once invaded by a crowd of moujik women and children. An official screamed ineffectually that the carriage was reserved for the military, upon which an irate moujik waving a huge long loaf of bread (like an enormous truncheon) cried out, pointing to the seething and heterogeneous crowd: "Are we not military, also, one and all of us reservists?"—and they refused to move. This was the first example I had of a fact which was borne upon me over and over again during my sojourn among the Russians—namely, that if you

ask leave to do anything you will probably be told that it is quite impossible owing to Article 146 of Section IV. of such and such a regulation, or that you must get a paper signed by such and such an official—but if you do the thing it is probable that nobody will interfere with you; there is a Teutonic mass of rules and regulations, but the Slav temperament is not equal to the task of insisting on their literal execution. It is as if an elaborate bureaucratic system were introduced into the internal administration of Ireland. One can imagine the result. Sometimes one blesses Heaven for this fact; at other times it seems to have its disadvantages, and one regrets the rigour of the game.

The confusion was incredible, and one man, by the vehement way in which he flung himself and his property on his wooden seat, broke it and fell with a crash to the ground. The third-class carriages are formed in this way; the carriage is not divided into separate compartments, but is like a corridor carriage, with no partition and no doors between the carriage proper and the passage; it is divided into three sections, each section consisting of six plank beds: three on each side of the window, and one placed above the other, forming three storeys. There is, besides this, a tier of seats against the windows in the passage at right angles to the regular seats. The occupant of a place has a right to the whole plank, so that he can lie down and sleep on it. I gave up

my place in the first carriage as I had lost sight of luggage and servant, and went in search of them and of the guard.

I found the guard, who stated that the train was full to overflowing, and that no further carriages would be added. I said I wanted four places, and that I did not mind if they were in the luggage van, or anywhere else. He took me to a carriage which was occupied mostly by soldiers. It must be borne in mind that the train by which I was travelling was not a military one, and that these soldiers were stray offshoots going to join their respective regiments.

The guard told the soldiers to make room for me, my servant, and two travelling companions. It seemed to me an impossible task; but it was done. I was presently encamped on a plank near the ceiling in the passage, at right angles to the regular seats. I soon fell into a deep sleep. The next thing I remember was being wakened at sunrise by a furious scuffle. A party of Chinese coolies —for all I knew then they may have been mandarins or yamen—had invaded the train. They were drunk, and spat and slobbered, and the soldiers with one voice cried, "Get out, Chinese." They were bundled backwards and forwards, rolled up and down the passage like a football, and were eventually allowed to settle on the platform outside the train. I did not go to sleep again. It was too interesting to sleep, and from my suspended plank I

enjoyed myself more than I have ever done in any theatre. The soldiers began to get up. One of them, dressed in a scarlet shirt, stood against the window and reverently said his prayers towards the rising sun, with many signs of the Cross. A little later a stowaway arrived; stowaways who travel in trains in Russia without tickets are called "hares." He was detected by the under guard, who advised him to get under the seat during the visit of the ticket collector. This he did; he remained under the seat about an hour and a half, until the ticket collector paid his visit. Then he crept from his hiding-place and squeezed in among the crowd in the carriage; the ticket collector frequently returned, but on every occasion he managed to escape notice by letting himself be crushed almost to a jelly by the other passengers.

My first day was one of sordid isolation. In my side bunk near the ceiling I could merely observe, but was unable to fraternise with my fellow-creatures. This was not to last. I was forced to lie down all day owing to a cut on my foot. This fact became known, and in the evening I was offered a bed on the ground floor, so to speak, in the central division of the carriage. I at once moved into it. The remaining storeys of the division were occupied by four soldiers and a sailor. They had all come from different parts of Russia. My two immediate neighbours were Little Russians; one was a Cossack. Never

in my life have I been so well treated, so well looked after, or better entertained. One of the Little Russians constituted himself into a sort of slave. He brought me tea, cleaned up the carriage, guessed one's every need. These soldiers asked me where I came from, but were not much the wiser when I said London. But Great Britain, France, Germany, and America were, they said, the only important Powers. We discussed countries and languages, and the debate was closed by one of them saying that there was no doubt that French was the most difficult tongue, and Russian the easiest. The French, they said, were a clever people. "As clever as you?" I asked. "No," they answered, "not so clever as us, but when we say clever we mean *nice*."

The next day I gradually made the acquaintance of all the occupants of the compartment. They divided the day into what they called "occupation" and "relaxation." Occupation consisted of busying oneself with something, that is, reading, constructing a musical instrument—one of the soldiers was making a violin—reading aloud, or making a "composition."

"Relaxation" consisted of playing cards, doing card tricks, telling stories, or singing songs. My fellow travellers played a game of cards which baffled my understanding. Two people play and the cards are equally divided on the table. A hand of five cards is chosen and the game begins. When

the five cards are played five more are chosen indiscriminately from the visible pack, so that all bother of thinking what might be in one's adversary's hand is avoided. The soldiers had two meals a day —dinner and tea—their rations consisting of three pounds of black bread, half a pound of meat, and cabbage soup. Sometimes they read aloud from some volumes of Gogol and Poushkin I had with me. They began anywhere in the book and stopped anywhere, and always thought it interesting. One of them pointed out to another the famous letter in Poushkin's *Evegenie Oniegin* and said that it was very good. I asked him to read a poem called *Bjesi*, which is about the little demons that lead the sledge driver astray in a snow-storm. He said it was good because one could sing it.

The soldiers had not read much. They have no time; but the book I found that they had nearly all of them read was Milton's *Paradise Lost.* When two years ago a schoolmaster in the Tambov Government told me that *Paradise Lost* was the most popular book in the village library I was astonished, and thought it an isolated instance. At a fair at Moscow, during Passion Week last year, I noticed that there were five or six different editions of translations of Milton's poem, with illustrations, ranging in price from 12 roubles to 30 kopecks, and while I was looking at one of them a moujik came up to me and advised me to buy it. "It's very

interesting," he said. "It makes one laugh and cry." I now understand why Milton is to the Russian peasantry what Shakespeare is to the German nation. They like the narrative of supernatural events which combine the fantasy of a fairy tale and the authority of the Scriptures—the schoolmaster in Tambov also told me that the peasants refused to read historical novels or stories because they said they were mere "inventions (Vwidoomki)" —some of it makes them laugh, and the elevated language gives them the same pleasure as being in church. It is possible to purchase *Paradise Lost* at almost any village booth. I bought an illustrated edition at a small side station between Kharbin and Baikal. Another English author who is universally popular, not among the soldiers but with the officers, the professional and upper and middle classes, is Jerome K. Jerome. He has for the present generation become a popular classic in the same way as Dickens did for the preceding generation. It was possible to buy a cheap edition of his works at every railway station where there was a bookstall between Moscow and Kharbin.

Conan Doyle's books were also universally popular. I never came across an officer who had not heard of Sherlock Holmes. The officers used to take in a great quantity of magazines. These magazines consisted largely of translations from the English; from the works of Jerome, Wells, Kipling,

Conan Doyle, Marie Corelli, and Mrs Humphry Ward. Officers used often to ask me who was the most popular English author. I used to answer that I thought it was Rudyard Kipling. This used to astonish them as they considered him rather childish. But then his stories lose all their salt in translation. Mrs Humphry Ward, they used to say, was a really *serious* author. Translations of Wells and Conan Doyle used to be running as serials in several magazines at a time.

Far the most cultivated of the men in the train was the sailor; he had read Gogol, Tolstoi, Tourgeneff, and Poushkin, but of him more anon.

In the evening a bearded soldier, who hailed from Tomsk, came and asked me if I would mind writing my name down on a piece of paper as he wished to mention in a letter home that he had seen me. In the course of conversation he said he had never seen an Englishman before, but that he had been told by sailors that Englishmen were easy to get on with and clean, much cleaner than Russians.

He told me his story, which was melancholy in the extreme. He had fallen asleep on sentry go, and had been deprived of nearly all the rights of a human being; he seemed to be absolutely without any spark of hope. The conversation ended in an

exchange of stories among the soldiers. One of them told me a story about a priest. He was doubtful as to whether I knew what a priest meant, and to explain it to me he said, "a priest, you know, is a man who always lies."

I asked the bearded man if he knew any stories. He at once sat down and began a fairy tale (Skaska). It was called the "Merchant's Son." It took an hour and a half to tell. I think it is in one of Mr Lang's "Fairy Books." I asked the man if he had read it. He said that he had been told it; that he could remember nothing he read but everything he was told. He told the tale beautifully; the narrative was interlarded with dialogue; the epithets and the attributes of each of the persons in the story were repeated every time they were mentioned in the true Epic manner. I feel certain that he recounted it to me, word for word, as it had been told to him. In this way the Homeric poems were handed down from one generation to another. The moment the man finished he began another called "Ivan the Little Fool," but I interrupted to undress and lie down, as I foresaw that the tale would be what the White Knight said about his song, "It's long, but it's very, very beautiful." It was long. It was one o'clock in the morning when he finished it. But to be told a really good long story, by a real story teller, till you go to sleep is an ideal and unwonted

experience in a journey. In Russia there are many such mute inglorious Kiplings and Stevensons.

When the story came to an end I was asked to tell them a story. I tried to relate the "Digit of the Moon," but when I had got half-way through I became aware that I had made an initial confusion by having stated that the prince had to guess riddles instead of having to put them.

I said that I had gone wrong and must stop and tell another story.

They said, "It doesn't matter, the story is very good as far as it goes."

Then a soldier told me a story which seemed to me to be well known; at least I have either read it or its equivalent in some such book as Mr Sidgwick's delightful exercises in Greek prose or in some French grammar. The hero of the story being Frederick the Great, or the Sultan, or some other popular monarch. This is how the soldier told it me—I repeat it because he gave it an original turn. The Tsar, he said, summoned the patriarch of the Church and informed him that unless he was capable, on being summoned to an audience, of answering three questions he would be executed. The patriarch, who was a simple man, and unable to answer questions without previous notice, went away heavy at heart. On the way home, however, he met with a miller, and the miller said to him: "Holy Patriarch, why are you so gloomy?"

The patriarch told him the cause of his distress. "Is that all," said the miller. "Leave the matter to me; I will on the appointed day dress up in your clothes, impersonate you, and answer the questions." When the appointed day arrived the miller went to the palace dressed up as the patriarch, and the Tsar put him the following question.

"How many stars," he asked, "are there in the sky?"

"Nine hundred thousand seven hundred and fifty-seven," answered the miller.

"How do you know?" said the Tsar.

"Your majesty has only to count them," replied the miller, "to be convinced that my estimate is correct."

"Well," said the Tsar, "we will pass on to the second question. How much am I worth? That is to say, not how rich am I, nor what is my price, but what is my exact value, stated in terms of money?"

The miller thought a little, and then said: "Our blessed Saviour was sold for thirty pieces of silver; your majesty is neither an entire divinity nor an entire mortal, 'Too dark for heaven and too divine for earth,' as the poet Lermontof says, I should therefore split the difference, and say that your majesty is worth exactly fifteen pieces of silver."

"Well," said the Tsar, "you have guessed two questions, but you must now answer the third and

most difficult of the three. What am I thinking at the present moment?"

"Your majesty," answered the miller, "is thinking that I am the holy patriarch, whereas I am in reality merely a miller in wolf's clothing." The Tsar laughed, and gave the miller a present, and sent him about his business."

The soldier then added, and this was the original turn he gave to the story, if the story already exists in this form. "The miller lives in Moscow *and I have seen him.*"

I must pass over the next day, which was much like the preceding one. We were to arrive at Manchuria Station in the night or the early morning, and as it was our last evening the soldiers entertained me with songs. Here the sailor came to the fore and sang song after song; some of his own composition. There were some splendid singers in the train, but the sailor was the only one who had a really good voice among my companions. These soldiers came from so many different parts of Russia that they had a difficulty in finding a song which they all knew. They sang, however, the song of the Siberian exiles "Glorious sea of the holy Baikal," which is one of the most melting melodies in the world. They sing in parts with great accuracy and in perfect tune. At Manchuria Station in the cold dawn I said good-bye to my friends who had treated me so kindly and

entertained me so well. I thought how little one half of the world knows about the other. These good-natured, simple, amusing, and quick people are thought by half the world to be sodden brutes, little better than beasts. Of the war they spoke little and as all soldiers speak of any war. But I was struck by a remark that the sailors made who had been to Nagasaki. One of the soldiers said the Japanese were a savage race, and probably fought with twisted scimitars, upon which the sailor cut him short by saying: "They are a charming, clean people, far more cultivated than you or I." One of the soldiers said he thought it would have been a far more sensible arrangement if the dispute had been settled by a single combat between Count Lamsdorff and Marquis Ito.

At Manchuria Station the commercial gentleman, who had regarded correspondents with suspicion, informed me that it was very doubtful if we should be allowed to cross the frontier into Manchuria.

After we had interviewed the "Commandant" of the station and been given our papers, he seemed rather mortified. He asked me how I had enjoyed travelling with the soldiers. I said that I had been very kindly treated and excellently entertained. This seemed to disturb him very much, and he remarked that the soldiers were naive people and that I could not deceive him as easily as I could them. I afterwards overheard him discussing with

the officers the inadvisability of letting Englishmen mingle with the soldiers and worm out of them forbidden information. The result was when I and my two companions were comfortably settled in a third-class compartment, whither some of the soldiers had followed us, we were requested to move into another carriage. As we had settled down for the night we said we would prefer to remain where we were. The train started and three Cossacks were presently sent to guard us. Two sat in the passage opposite to us and one lay down on the floor between our bunks. The soldiers asked them what they were doing. They answered, "We have been told to guard these men; but they are not doing anything; they are sleeping." "Perhaps," one of the soldiers suggested, "they ought not to have come here." As it turned out our commercial friend had unwittingly done us a service, for a pickpocket had found his way into the train, and, except us, everybody in the carriage was robbed.

The next morning we did move into another carriage where there was more room, and by the time we arrived at Tzitzikar Station I think the officers must have received some answer to their inquiries with regard to us; as a marked change in their manner amounting to extreme deference was visible.

The journey to Kharbin passed off without any

incident. Some excitement was caused by the announcement that a band of Hun-hutzes had been seen, and that they might very likely attack the train. This, however, did not occur; but a whole crowd of Chinese officers boarded the train at one station and filled up the spare seats, especially the top-seats, from whence they spat, without ceasing, on the occupants of the lower seats, much to the annoyance of a French lady, who remarked that "les chinois sont impossibles."

From Manchuria Station to Kharbin the journey lasted three nights and two days. I arrived at Kharbin on the 18th May after a journey of seventeen days from St Petersburg.

CHAPTER III

KHARBIN AND MUKDEN

FROM the conversation of some of my fellow-travellers from Manchuria Station I had obtained the impression that Kharbin resembled one of those huge American cities that grow up in a night. I pictured to myself a town somewhat like Vienna, with asphalt pavement and electric light. On arriving all that I saw before me from the station was a sea of mud, deep, thick swamps which did duty for roads, a few houses in the distance, and a certain amount of scaffolding. There were no vehicles to be got, except a Chinese peasant's cart, which consists of a large board and huge solid wheels like the carriages pictured in "prehistoric peeps." I experienced a sinking sense of disappointment, and echoed Faust's cry of disillusion on seeing Helen of Troy: "Is *this*," I thought, "the place that's launched a thousand ships?" Later on, after driving round the town to find rooms in a hotel, it became evident that on the whole Kharbin is a large place; the town proper, the old town, which is called Pristan, is three miles away from the station;

the new town consists of government offices, a church, a hotel and some hospitals, and the Russo-Chinese Bank. That was true then; but now all is changed. You arrive at a gigantic station built in the *art-nouveau* style, which has spread like a disease from Germany over the whole of Russia. The old station has been converted into a hospital. In front of the station is a spacious boulevard leading to the bank, and you have at once the impression that you are in town. When I arrived in May I felt that I had come to the house on the marsh. I eventually found rooms in the Hotel Oriant, which I think must be the most expensive hotel in the world; it is kept by two ex-convicts, with squinting eyes and a criminal expression; and the prices of food and lodging were exalted beyond dreams of Ritz.

The bedroom was damp and dirty, and cost 15s. a day, without the bed. I have with me now a bill for a small supper, which, for two people, amounted to 72 roubles. The population of Kharbin consists almost entirely of ex-convicts and Chinamen. This fact did not surprise me, and I agreed with a Frenchman who said to me, "On a raison de dire qu'il faut avour tué père et mère pour venir vivre dans un tel pays."

The cab drivers were all ex-convicts, and fearful tales were told one of how, if dissatisfied with their fares, they merely killed you and threw your body

into the street. On the return home an officer told me how a cabman driving him home had thanked him for driving with him, and when the officer asked why, had explained that the presence of an officer was a guarantee of safety, and that the night before he had been set upon by two thieves who had beaten him till he gave up all his money, warning him that if he screamed he would be stabbed. They had then proceeded to strip him, and finding a watch concealed in his sock they had beaten him again. The authority of the police in Kharbin seems to be non-existent. Kharbin is now called the Chicago of the East. This is not a compliment to Chicago. I only stayed there a week on the way out, and not at all on the return journey; but from accounts I heard it is now a changed city, full of Greeks, who do an enormous trade, and theatres and music-halls. It was the Cape Town of the war.

When we arrived at Kharbin we were told that it was impossible to go any further; that the correspondents at Mukden were on the point of returning, and that Admiral Alexieff himself was expected. This was a fact. I was told that the plan of campaign was a general retreat to Kharbin, which was to become the headquarters of General Kouropatkin, and that he would not advance thence until he had what he considered to be a sufficient number of troops.

A week later a meeting took place between General Kouropatkin and the Viceroy at Mukden, and whether or not it was the result of this interview, the forward movement south was begun which ended in the battle of Wa-fan-go.

Among business men whom I met, there was a certain feeling of relief that the war had broken out, that the uneasiness and suspense had been put an end to, and that the matter would be settled one way or another. They criticised, however, the manner in which the negotiations had been carried on most violently. One man said to me if you carry on negotiations in such a manner you should have 100,000 men ready to back you up, whereas in the whole of Manchuria, when the war broke out, there were not more than 60,000 men." It appeared that after the battle of the Yalu General Mischenko had only eighteen sotnias, and there were only a few regiments of infantry at Liaoyang.

In fact, the Japanese might have marched to Mukden and taken it without risk and without loss. That they did not do so is, I suppose, to be attributed to the fact that they thought they would capture the whole of the Russian army at Liaoyang, and had made their plans accordingly, and considered consequently that the more troops the Russians poured into Manchuria the better.

After staying a week in this depressing centre I

travelled to Mukden in great luxury owing to the courtesy of General Holodovsky, who gave me a place in a first-class carriage, which was reserved for him. He was a charming and cultivated man, with a passion for out-of-door sports and oriental china. He was also responsible for the admirable fortifications which were constructed at Liaoyang, and further south between Liaoyang and Ta-shi-chiao. It only took a day and two nights to reach Mukden.

On arriving at Mukden one is aware that one has left the Western world far behind one; Kharbin is a great modern abortion; Mukden is an oriental masterpiece. It is said to resemble Pekin on a smaller scale, to be a miniature Pekin. It is a large square town surrounded by an extremely thick dilapidated wall, round which you can walk. Inside it are masses of closely-packed one-storied houses divided up into innumerable small alleys, and intersected by two or three main streets, in which the shops riot in an extravagance of oriental sign-posts; huge blue and red boots, bespangled with gold stars, hanging in front of the bootmakers, golden and vari-coloured shields and banners hanging in front of other shops; theatres, each with a great clanging gong sounding incessantly to attract the passer-by; add to all this, the sunshine, the brilliant colouring of the people's clothes, the "tinkling temple bells and the spicy garlic smells," and even if you have never been further than Mukden, when

you return to the damp and drizzle of London, the wet pavements, the rawness, the fog, and the half-light, you will hear the East calling—you will long for the "day and the dust and the ecstasy."

The palace, which is deserted and yet contains a collection of priceless art-treasures, jewels and china and embroidery and delicately illuminated MSS. locked up in mouldering cupboards, is exquisitely beautiful. Its courtyards are carpeted with luxuriant grass, its fantastic, dilapidated wooden walls, carven, painted and twisted into strange shapes such as you see on an oriental vase. The planks are rotten and mouldering, the walls eaten with rain and damp; and one thanks Heaven that it is so, that nothing has been restored. Nothing lives for ever; is it not then better that the shapes and buildings whose transitory existence delights the eyes of mortals be left in their beauty, left to live and grow ever more beautiful as they decay in obedience to the gradual change of time than to suffer the affront and the mutilation of man's brutal and hideous rejuvenating process?

Mukden reminded me of Hans Andersen's fairy tales: its buildings and its inhabitants, the shops, the temples, the itinerant vendors in the street, the sounding gongs, the grotesque signs and quaint fantastic images, seem to belong to the realm of childish trolldom. Here it was, one feels, that the Emperor of China, of whom Andersen tells, sat and

sighed for the song of the nightingale, when his artificial, metallic singing-bird suddenly snapped and ceased to sing. Still more enchanting in the same order of things are the tombs of Pai-ling and Fu-ling: here the delicate, gorgeous-coloured, and fantastic buildings which protect the remains of the Manchurian dynasty are approached by wild wood-ways, paths of soft grass and alleys of aromatic and slumber-scented trees.

The high, quaint towers and ramparts which surround the tombs—in China all the houses are of one story, and the sacred monuments are high, for the reason that the Chinese say that only spirits can live in high buildings—are in the same state of semi-dilapidation; the brilliant colours are half-faded, the stairways are rotten, and overgrown with moss and grass. Here one feels that in some secluded attic at the top of a creaking stair, among the cobwebs and the dust and the starved wild flowers, surely here the sleeping beauty of the wood is slumbering, obstinately slumbering, lest she awake to hear the noise of shrapnel, and to see to what base use men can employ their energy and their ingenuity.

After I had stayed a week in General Holodovsky's railway carriage, daily apologising for so protracted a visit, I moved into the town, to the Der-lung-djen, which means the inn of the dragon. It consisted of a spacious courtyard, full of horses, surrounded by a low storied series of rooms, right against the southern

wall of the town, and close to the southern gate. Here I engaged a Chinese boy and a *mafoo* (groom), and lived for sixteen days. Several of the war correspondents lived there also, and it would have been a period of delicious ease had one not been aware that exciting events were happening just out of one's reach, and had we not been tormented by the desire to be there also. My first impressions of the Chinese consisted of respect mingled with wonder at their extraordinary dexterity, cleverness, and competence.

My Chinese boy informed me, after he had been with me a day, that I ought to raise his wages, since he came from Canton, and was therefore clean, whereas he said "Chinese man dirty." His name was Afoo; he spoke Pidgin-Russian. I saw from the first that he thought the idea of going further south to Liaoyang or anywhere near the front was silly. The Chinaman is essentially a man of peace. War he considers the greatest folly under the sun. A soldier—that is to say, a fighting man—is to him the scum of the earth. (The Duke of Wellington made the same remark about the rank-and-file of the British army.) To fight is to be guilty in his eyes of the worst form of vulgarity. It is no wonder, then, that, when he heard I was intending to go to Liaoyang, he remarked that his father was ill at Kharbin, and his wife not so well as might be expected at Tientsin, and asked leave to visit them, which I refused. He was clever, but casual; capable,

but obstinate; and urbane without being rude. One day I told him he was stupid. "Of course," he answered, "I am stupid. If I were not stupid I should not be your servant, but a mandarin."

I have certainly never at any period of my life been so well looked after, nor had my needs ministered to, my unspoken wants guessed, and my habits divined so well as during these peaceful days at the Der-lung-djen by Afoo. It was when the correspondents gave a dinner-party that the Chinese boys displayed their talents. Then all their pride came out; their desire to show they were better and more capable than the servants of our guests; then their quickness, agility, and dexterity were manifest in their highest degree.

The question which one is at once asked is, what was the attitude of the Chinese towards the Russians and towards the war? Their attitude towards the war was simple enough, but their dealings with the Russians and what they felt about them is, I think, a more complicated question.

When I arrived at Mukden the population there was deriving great profit from the war. They were selling corn and carts and every conceivable commodity to the Russians at fancy prices. The educated Chinese used to tell me that it was neither the Russians nor the Japanese that they feared, but the possible breaking loose of the Chinese army.

The situation was, therefore, as if Scotland had

been occupied by France and invaded by Germany, and the Scotch people were vaguely hostile to the French and guardedly friendly to the Germans, but quaking with terror at the thought of Glasgow and Edinburgh being looted by the Scots Guards.

The Russians have behaved as cleverly in theory as one can behave to the Chinese, and yet the result has not been altogether successful. I will try and point out why.

The Russians have in no way interfered with the internal justice or administration of China. Chinese justice pursues its uncompromising course. It is not more unjust than occidental justice, but it is different. Its object is to punish crime. As all oriental races, the Chinese are indifferent to death and impervious to the minor forms of legal torture, such as mere flogging. The law, therefore, is necessarily severe, and less sentimental than ours. They have a rule, that for every crime which is brought to the notice of the law a criminal must perish, or someone must perish—one crime, one criminal; one criminal, one head off somewhere. If the criminal chooses, however, he can procure an understudy, who suffers in his stead.

> "The difficulty is to find
> A trusty friend who will not mind."

It is not as a matter of fact very difficult, and can be done if you are willing to spend a little money.

It is impossible for a Chinaman to be condemned to death unless he confesses that he is guilty of the crime of which he is accused, and the accused is tortured daily — there are many exceptions and grounds of mitigation—until he confesses, then his head is cut off. The advantage of this system is that a thing like the Dreyfus case, which dismembers and convulses a whole nation, is impossible, and the main object is achieved. The Chinese have recognised the fact that ideal justice is impossible, that it is very difficult to lay hands on the true offender, that human things are so complicated that to apportion the right measure of blame is a task too high for man, and that since things are so, and crime must be repressed, crime itself must be punished, and it is. The only competent judges of the question, *i.e.* men who have devoted their lives to the study of Chinese institutions, say that Chinese law is better adapted to ensure the punishment of a greater number of guilty persons than the English law; and that although innocent men may be occasionally punished (a case which sometimes occurs in Europe also), the well-being of the mass is better preserved than by a system in which sentiment plays a larger part.

Again, the Chinese penal code has been characterised as being remarkable for the conciseness and simplicity of its style, its *businesslikeness* and absence of verbiage.

Another good point is that the judge, if not influenced by bribery, may endeavour to give a common-sense verdict; he is not bound by precedents, and he can overrule the custom if he sees his way to a reasonable course of action. To try and make the Chinese adopt occidental methods—to give them the benefit of the Code Napoléon, or the beautifully simple system of English or Scotch law, would be disastrous. This the Russians have recognised. They have grasped the great fact that nobody can govern the Chinese but the Chinese, and have acted upon it.

Secondly, they have absolutely forbidden all religious propaganda.

There is nothing but praise to be said on the subject of our missionaries at Mukden or Liaoyang: they are men for whom I have the greatest respect and admiration; men who, this winter, have done great and admirable work among the refugees driven to Mukden from their devastated homes. But treating the question in the abstract the Chinese cannot fail to appreciate facts such as the German occupation of Kiaw-chaw; they must have learnt by now that the missionary is the first step in a sequence of things, the ultimate stages of which are gunboat, concession and occupation; and it may be doubted whether it is not rather presumptuous on our part to try and convert the Chinese, for are we so sure that the life led as the result of our

methods, our morality, and our religion, is superior to theirs? However that may be, I think one can safely say that if you wish to get on well with the Chinese the less you try to convert them the better, and the Russians have never made the slightest effort in that direction.

Thirdly, the Russians have no racial antipathy to the yellow race. The Russian soldiers and the Chinese fraternise as people belonging to the same race and the same class, and not only the soldiers, but the officers treat the Chinese lower classes, and let themselves be treated, with great and good-natured familiarity. This seems to me to account for the success of the Russians in getting on with the Chinese, and for their failure in making themselves respected.

The main facts about the Chinese in Manchuria are, firstly, that they are hostile to any foreign occupation, and that they regard Russian-man, English-man, German-man as one and the same—namely, robber-man or Hun-hutze. That is the principal point, the rest is merely a question of detail. To the Japanese they are, and will be, favourable according to how far they consider they will be successful in turning the Russians out of Manchuria, but I do not fancy they would like a Japanese occupation, and during the Chinese War the Japanese although they behaved better than the Europeans because their troops were better

disciplined, were nevertheless unflinchingly severe towards the Chinese.

Secondly, the situation has been altered by the change in the circumstances by the fact that occupation in times of peace and occupation in times of war are two separate things.

On the whole the Russians treat the Chinese exceedingly well. Russian soldiers who rob or molest the Chinese are treated with extreme severity. A soldier who is convicted of twice having robbed a Chinaman can be hanged. It is said that the familiarity with which the Russians treat the Chinese lowers their prestige. This is no doubt true, but does not seem to me to be of great importance. Mr Whigham, in his book on Manchuria, says that no one will persuade him the Chinaman prefers justice to sympathy or likes to be pushed off the pavement into the middle of the road. The situation is now different owing to the fact of the war. The war is, to say the least of it, a nuisance to the Chinese, and the Russians are the outward and visible sign of the war.

Considering the fact that the Chinese are hostile to the Russians in the war question, it seems to me marvellous that so few cases of friction occurred. I imagine this is due to the extraordinary cleverness and supple adaptability of the Chinese to the circumstances. I was buying a shirt one day in Liaoyang, a thin silk shirt such as the Russians all

wore in the summer. The shop-keeper thought at first I was a Russian soldier, and patted me on the back and said, "Shang-ho hodjia," which means good old fellow. I then said I was an Englishman, upon which his manner became deferential, and he said, "Englishman good man, Russian man bad man."

The missionaries tell me, and I have frequently repeated the argument as if it was my own idea, that what the Chinese object to is not the familiar treatment they experience at the hands of the Russians, but the inconsistency of the treatment. That they are arm-in-arm with them at one moment and kick them the next.

But if this is true of the Russians it is equally true of the English, and it comes about in this way. I have seen this occur also over and over again. The Englishman is treating the Chinaman with what he thinks, and with what is, perfect fairness and friendliness. The Chinaman suddenly exasperates him beyond all endurance, and then the Englishman kicks him. The net result of this is that the Englishman kicks the Chinaman if he is angry, and does not ever go arm-in-arm with him. The Russian goes arm-in-arm with the Chinaman, and does not kick him if he is angry, but only if he is drunk; and if he, drunk or sober, maltreats a Chinaman he is liable to be hanged.

The result ought to be that the Chinaman should

respect the Englishman more and like the Russians better. This would be true in times of peace, but it is the Russians and not the English who are making war in China.

It must be remembered that, unless you have spent all your life in China, it is difficult to treat the Chinese consistently owing to the fact that they are certain at some time or other to exasperate you to madness.

The Russians consider our treatment of the Chinese brutal, and it is true that I only once saw a Russian kick a Chinaman, and he, the Russian, was drunk. I was, on the other hand, constantly amazed at the way in which the soldiers allowed themselves to be positively bullied at times by the Chinese. The truth of the matter is that the Russians get on perfectly well with the Chinese—whether the Chinese respect them more or less than Englishmen or others is neither here nor there—but no amount of getting on well will compensate for the fact that the Russians are not only occupying their country but making war in it. Therefore the question of treatment has become a question of detail sunk in the larger fact of the war. I think the Russians have often been inconsistent in their treatment of the Chinese, or rather that this inconsistency is carried further in their case owing to the fact of the war, and the Chinese, being an element of that fact, the Russians have, I think, often

behaved far too leniently to the Chinese when these have shown themselves openly hostile to them, and then exasperated at the result they suddenly adopt a severer method which affects the innocent rather than the guilty. Whenever I saw a Chinaman arrested for complicity with the Japanese or the Hun-hutzes he invariably escaped.

The matter can be briefly summed up as follows :—

The Chinaman has no inborn hatred of the stranger, but detests the foreign occupation and foreigners who come with a purpose, such as to obtain concessions or other things, which they know in the long run mean occupation.

The Russians get on well with the Chinese, who accepted their rule, which was easy and light, quietly and cheerfully in times of peace; but now that they are the outward and visible manifestation not only of occupation, but of war and all its horrors, they wish them at Jericho. It is very difficult to get the Chinese to express an outspoken opinion on such things. One Chinaman told me he considered all the foreigners who infested Manchuria —including the Japanese—as robber-men. The Chinese suffer also greatly at the hands of the interpreters who have taken service with the Russians. These men are rascals of the lowest form. They extort money from the wretched peasants under the threat of denouncing them as Hun-hutzes, and I have no doubt that they fre-

quently betray the Russians whenever an occasion occurs. I saw one of these men who returned to Mukden from Liaoyang after the Japanese occupation of that city. He was asked by an officer what was going on at Liaoyang. "The Japanese," he replied, "have burnt most of the houses."

"What Japanese general is in command?" asked the officer.

"His name in Chinese is the following," he replied, saying a long and unpronounceable concatenation of syllables.

Now, if his name had been Nodzu or Oku, it would have been the same in Chinese. He merely wished not to say.

There was one interpreter who was attached to the battery with whom I subsequently lived, named Mishka, whom I could not help liking. I have no doubt he was a scoundrel, but a sympathetic scoundrel. One day he led two Cossacks into temptation, and took them to a place where they drank and looted.

He was told on the morrow that he must be beaten, and was given the choice of being sent to the Chinese magistrate or being beaten by a Cossack. He said he would rather neither course were adopted. When he was told that it was absolutely necessary he chose to be punished by the Cossack.

For a week afterwards he avoided the officers and would not come near the colonel. At last,

on being asked the reason, he said: "My ashamed" (moia stidno). The Chinese peasants showed extraordinary patience in the manner in which they bore the deprivations and sufferings which were the result of the war. These sufferings were very great, especially in the villages south of Mukden, which are now all deserted, the inhabitants having fled to the town. While a fight was actually going on the Chinaman used generally to dig a hole in the ground—a small catacomb —and thatch it with kowliang, and there conceal himself with his wife and his family until the fight was over, creeping out every now and then to make tea. The interpreters who followed the troops were perfectly used to the firing, and did not care a fig. They were tough individuals, and I saw one—he was quite small—give a big Cossack a tremendous thrashing. I am convinced that if the Chinese were organised, and ceased to think fighting vulgar, they would make excellent troops.

While I was at Mukden I had an interview with the Chinese Viceroy, and conversed with him through an interpreter. He refused to express any definite opinion, even on the subject of the weather.

When asked if the war would last long he replied, "War is an expensive business."

The day after my visit to the Viceroy, I and Mr de Jessen, a Danish correspondent, were invited to luncheon at the Chinese Foreign Office.

In deference to the European guests the meal was semi-European. It began with tea, and then there followed about seventeen courses, consisting of small dishes of meat, each one almost exactly like the other. There came a moment when I refused a dish; the meal then immediately ceased. It was evidently managed on the plan of feeding your guests till they showed signs of disinclination for food, and then stopping. On the following day the mandarins who had been present left cards in the morning to say they were coming to see us, and arrived in the afternoon and paid an elaborate visit.

On the whole the impression one gathered from the Chinese was that they had accepted the war, as they accept everything else, in a philosophical spirit, and were resolved to make the best of it by letting no occasion slip of making some profit.

As to the question of the "yellow peril" I certainly would not be so rash as to make any prophecy. The question is, I suppose, will the Chinese ever adopt Western methods, as the Japanese have done, in order to drive foreigners from their country and to assume a leading and threatening part in the affairs of the world.

In order to do this they would have to cease being what they are at present. They would have to become "patriots" in the sense of organising themselves into a competitive machine.

Philosophically the Chinaman is an individualist in that he prizes the quality of the individual life lived more dearly than the place of his country in the arena of nations; but practically the individual does not exist in China.

The unit of society in China is not the individual but the family; the members of the family are fractions of the whole; a family is responsible for the good behaviour of its members,* a neighbourhood for its inhabitants, and an official for those whom he governs; the conservation, preservation, and perpetuation of the family are the aims of human society. The Chinaman, therefore, is a patriarchalist, and his aim is peace.

Nevertheless the victory of the Japanese over European troops may very likely produce a change of some kind. Monsieur Anatole France, in his latest book, wittily says that what we have to fear from the yellow peril is nothing in comparison with what the Chinese have to fear from the "white peril," and that so far the Chinese have not yet looted the Louvre, nor has a Chinese fleet bombarded Cherbourg. I should say that the yellow peril will depend for its reality and extent entirely on this: how seriously the Chinese will consider the "white peril" to be? and how obnoxious will Europeans make themselves to the Chinese? If the Europeans

* It is impossible for a fraudulent bankrupt to settle his goods on his wife or family, as the family must make good his losses.

appear to them to step over the limit of what is bearable, they will take measures accordingly.

But the war has introduced a new and serious factor into the case. The Chinese have now realised that so far from the white races being invincible owing to their guns, their engines, and all the attributes of their superior civilisation, they can be thoroughly well beaten by yellow men who use the implements of the white race with far greater effect and skill than they do themselves.

There is also in China a Young Chinese party which is all for reform and for following the example of the Japanese. The British encourage this party and imagine that such a reconstruction would be of great advantage to Europeans and especially to the British; not long ago one of the newspapers wrote an article called "The Arming of China" and "Increase of British Prestige," making these statements as if the second part was the logical result of the first. One of the most competent observers of Chinese affairs told me that he considered this point of view to be erroneous. "There are," he said, "two anti-foreign parties in China, the Boxers and the Young Chinese party, but both are agreed as to one fundamental tenet, and that is "China for the Chinese." Should the Young Chinese party be ever successful in getting the upper hand and enforcing reforms, so far from there being any increase of British prestige there would

be a universal tendency to kick every foreigner out of China, after having previously cut off their noses, and then the Chinese would return to their own avocations. "But," he added, "it is a very difficult matter to force such an idea into a British head, because the British think that reform must necessarily be accompanied by enlightened and generous ideas such as the partition of China and the exploitation of its wealth by the British, open doors and a parliament, a habeas corpus act and concessions. "But believe me," he said finally, "Chinese reform means the end of all European prestige. If China is ever powerful in the way that Japan is, the Chinese will make very little difference between the British, the Germans, the Belgians, and the Hun-hutzes."

People say airily "the Chinese are so backward, poor things"; my advice to such people is to go and see. They will find that the Chinese arrived at a certain level of civilisation centuries ago and remained there, because they saw nothing in the progress of other countries which tempted them to imitate it. They anticipated our so-called civilisation and deliberately discarded it, since they did not consider that it would tend to greater happiness in the long run.

They are not ambitious and they are satisfied with a little. To them the important thing is not the quantity of things achieved in life, but the

quality of the life lived. They are not in a hurry; for that reason they fail to see why a motor-car is a better vehicle than a rickshaw, because if no one is in a hurry, there is no disadvantage in proceeding in a leisurely fashion.

They see us spending our whole lives in hurrying after something, in aiming at being somebody, in kicking others aside in order to get somewhere. They continue the game for the sake of the game and not for the sake of winning any concrete prize. They are honest and hard-working, cultivated, intelligent, good-mannered, and good-tempered. They hate fighting, brawling, noise of all kinds, drunkenness and bad manners. Are they so very backward?

CHAPTER IV

LIAOYANG TO TA-SHI-CHIAO

I ARRIVED at Liaoyang on the 22nd of June. Liaoyang is only fifty miles from Mukden, and the journey took nearly twelve hours. Liaoyang, as a town, resembles Mukden only it is less imposing, and perhaps even more picturesque and more dirty; the environs are certainly more beautiful. Like Mukden it is surrounded by a big wall; only at Mukden the town has overflowed and formed large suburbs; at Liaoyang there is only a small suburb on the east side of the town. As at Mukden, there was a collection of small brick-built government offices clustered round the railway station.

There was far more animation at Liaoyang than at Mukden; General Kouropatkin was at Ta-shi-chiao when I arrived; but nevertheless one felt that one was somewhere near a war. Streams of carts poured through the town, the green two-wheeled carts called dvoogolkas which the Russians use for their transport; troops frequently marched through the streets and officers arrived at the hotel on their way to or from the front.

The hotel was kept by a Greek; it was not very comfortable, and the flies gave one but little peace; still there was an atmosphere of gaiety about Liaoyang, a constant stream of arrivals, a bustle and life which did not exist in Mukden. I spent a week at the hospital, being laid up at Dr Westwater's house, a part of which he has very kindly turned into an hospital. Dr Westwater is almost the only foreigner in Manchuria who has any prestige in the eyes of the Chinese. He has lived at Liaoyang for many years, and the Chinese, not excepting the Hunhutzes and the Boxers, regard him as a kind of divinity. He is equally popular and respected among the Russians, and was attached to their Red Cross during the Chinese campaign. He made a part of his house into an hospital, and looked after such of the correspondents and military attachés who fell ill.

His garden was a most ideal spot, and testified to the extraordinary fertility of the soil—you sow a seed one day, and on the morrow you notice a herbaceous border. Every kind of vegetable grows there. With regard to this, strangely mistaken ideas are prevalent in England; people used to say that it would be impossible for the Russians to carry on the war in Manchuria, as they would not be able to live on the country, whereas it is owing to the fact of Manchuria being what it is that the war was possible at all. Russia could have supported an army of a

million men in Manchuria without importing a single sack of flour from Russia.

In a normal year there is a big enough export from Newchang to feed an army. Moreover, the granary of Manchuria is the district north of Mukden which up to a short time ago had been practically untouched. To talk about the Russian resources being exhausted because Liaoyang had been taken, was equivalent to saying that because London was taken the resources of an army occupying all the country north of the Trent were at an end. Practically, all the supply that the Russians import from Russia consists of bread, sugar, biscuits, and coffee.

Again, they had in Mongolia an inexhaustible supply of horses and cattle on which they could draw. If there was occasionally a shortage of food it was not owing to lack of supplies, but to lack of time, as is always the case on forced marches.

What a country for the disciples of Mr Haig and Mrs Earle! What a delightful pot-pourri could be written from a Manchurian garden! In connection with this, Dr Westwater told me that he performed the most serious operations on the Chinese without any rise of temperature occurring, and he attributed this to the fact that they eat no meat.

At Liaoyang my Chinese servant left me, partly because I had paid him his wages, partly because I was going to the front, and partly because I gently

kicked him out of the room one day when he had not come near me because it was a Chinese feast. He said he had lost face and must therefore leave my service.

Lord Brooke, Reuter's correspondent, and I engaged two Montenegrin servants, named respectively Georgio and Siacco, who were afterwards the source of no little trouble.

On the 13th of July we received the news that we were allowed to go to the front, and on the 15th I left with Brooke for Ta-shi-chiao, together with two Montenegrins, two mules, and five ponies which it took twelve hours to entrain. Brooke and I had been appointed to the cavalry division of the 1st Siberian Army Corps, consisting of four regiments of Siberian Cossacks, a regiment of Dragoons, and the 2nd Trans-Baikal battery under the command of General Samsonoff. I stayed a day and a night at Ta-shi-chiao, and lived in the vestry of the Roman Catholic Church with MM. Nodeau and Roucouli, the correspondents of the *Journal* and the *Temps*.

General Samsonoff was himself at Ta-shi-chiao, being indisposed after months of ceaseless and exhausting work. His place was being taken by General Kossagofsky. I proceeded to join my division, which was occupying a small village south-west of that place.

I started early in the morning and found the village without much difficulty. The general was

away, but I was received by two officers of the 4th Siberian Cossack Regiment who were camping in a small Chinese kitchen-garden. They gave me some excellent soup, and some chicken, and tea, followed immediately afterwards by coffee, and received me with that kind of natural, simple hospitality which is more precious than rubies, and is, in fact, the real true courtesy. One thinks of the elaborate counterfeit of good manners, the studied phrases of those who, being denuded of the true gift, aim at a kind of Louis XIV. style of complicated civility, and one shudders. These Cossack officers were real Cossacks. They had spent most of their life in the wilds of I do not quite know what inaccessible region, with no fellow-companions save the soldiers under them and Chinese peasants.

During my stay in Manchuria I met almost every kind of Russian officer: guardsmen who had exchanged into cavalry regiments; men who had been there for years; officers from provincial Russian towns, from Siberian towns, from the Caucasus, from Moscow, from Perm, from Omsk, from the German frontier; men who had travelled all over the world, and spoke every language; others who had lived all their life in Siberia, or the Trans-Baikal regions, or Manchuria. I found that the good qualities which distinguish the best of them were the same; the same, in fact, which are instantly recognisable in all classes of all countries, consisting of that absence

of swagger, conceit, and self-consciousness which makes a boy liked at Eton. Never have I met with more perfect examples of this type than these two wild Cossacks. There are plenty of other types who, without possessing these qualities, which are often even conspicuously absent, are nevertheless good-natured and likeable. Tolstoi in his Sebastopol sketches shows us all types of the Russian officer and soldier, with his marvellous searchlight of truth and genius. But it was not until I had lived among them that I realised how faithful his portraits were. The cavalry officers seemed to me superior to the infantry officer; but of the infantry I had practically but little experience. The officers and men of the Siberian army seemed to me superior to those of the Russian army proper: that is to say, they knew their business better. The Russian officers have been greatly abused; they are represented as incompetent drunkards, brutal, stupid, and unconscientious. Military instruction, as far as I can judge, they do seem to lack; but I do not see that we are exactly the people to throw stones at them on that account.

As to the question of incompetence, it seems to me that the system is more at fault than the officers. There is a general want of organisation, cohesion, and discipline in the whole army; and the fault comes more from above than from below.

With regard to the question of drunkenness, the

only fact which seems to me important on the matter is that at the actual front there was no drunkenness. There was nothing to drink except tea, and occasional extremely limited doles of vodka.

It is quite true that officers sometimes got drunk at Liaoyang and Mukden, but Liaoyang and Mukden were not the front. Certain facts must also be taken into consideration: when Russians drink they drink a great deal harder than we do; they drink vodka, which is brandy—brandy for heroes, as Dr Johnson said. Secondly, that Liaoyang and, subsequently, Mukden were, during the war, in the same relation to the front (since Kharbin was too far off to be easily accessible, it taking sometimes as much time to reach Kharbin from Mukden as it would to reach Constantinople from London) as Capetown during the South African war. Therefore, when officers arrived there for a short respite from the privations and hardships of life at the front, they felt entitled to enjoy themselves. The important fact is that they were not drunk in the field, that they were not drunk when they should have been in discharge of their duties; and that if they liked drink or not it did not prevent them from being brave men, and dying with alacrity. I never heard any foreign witness during the war, however critical, cast any aspersions on their courage.

Thirdly, there was an intermediate class of men

who were not officers by nature, but who had come out to the war from curiosity, and wore a uniform; this class was the most conspicuous at places like Liaoyang and Mukden, and tended to create a false impression. This was more noticeable at the beginning of the war. After two or three months General Kouropatkin weeded the army of its noxious elements with a ruthless hand. With regard to the question of general *tenue*, there were, it is true, some bad exceptions; but the general truth with regard to the officers who were at the front, is that they may lack instruction and may be deficient in many things, but as a rule they are brave men who do their duty.

I will give an instance to show what I mean. I was entertained at Kharbin by a certain officer who gave to me and some friends of mine a generous feast, which resulted in our host being inebriate for at least thirty-six hours. That same officer I happen to know never left his regiment during the time I spent in Manchuria, which was always at the extreme front, except for one day; and his regiment was kept continually at work, with only the bare necessaries of life till men and horses could do no more.

But a foreigner, had he seen that man in Kharbin, would have put him down as a hopeless case. During the whole time I was attached to a home battery I never saw a single case of drunkenness

among the officers, even when we were quartered at Mukden. Before we started for the battle of the Sha-ho I managed to buy a dozen bottles of champagne from the store. I expected that we should have a great carouse. This was not the case. Somewhat to my astonishment a glass apiece was dealt out, and the rest was laid by, by the head of the mess, for future occasions, against the event of there being guests. Of course it was impossible to carry about any quantity of wine or spirits when we were at the front, and the only places where carouses of any kind were possible were towns such as Mukden and Liaoyang and Kharbin.

While I lived with General Kossagofsky's staff, I met some very fine fellows. The most remarkable was a young man called Egoroff. He had passed all his examinations, and was offered a place on the general staff, which he refused, as he preferred a more modest situation at the front, where he would be sure of getting some fighting. He was a splendidly built, good-looking young fellow, exceedingly modest, and well educated. He was always at his post, and took part in every single small engagement which presented itself. He was a born leader of men, and saved the situation when a panic occurred among the Cossacks of his division at Yantai.

Somehow or other fate was against him, and he never had an opportunity of brilliantly distinguish-

ing himself, and he was one of those men who never push or put themselves to the fore. Many men during the war gained a great reputation owing to some lucky fluke, and more or less rested on their laurels. He, I think, worked as hard as anyone; if there was kudos to be gained or not, he was always *there*, and had gained no remuneration except the inward satisfaction which nobody can take away from him; that glow which Keats said made him so indifferent to praise or blame. He answered to the description of a brave man that one of the characters gives in Tolstoi's Sebastopol sketches, namely a man who always behaves as he should do, a definition which Tolstoi points out closely resembles Plato's definition of courage. He struck one as if he had stepped out of one of Shakespeare's historical plays, and he could be cast for the part of Hotspur or Henry V. During the war I met with counterparts of nearly all the individuals portrayed by Shakespeare in his historical plays, and heard conversations almost identically the same as those recorded in Henry V. among the soldiers in the English lines the night before the battle of Agincourt. This man impressed me as much as any man I met during the war.

But apart from a phœnix of this kind I met a great many officers who struck me as good fellows, and who did their work well. The good officers remained at the front; the inferior kind used to

hang about the stations, until General Kouropatkin put a stop to this. One point which certainly deserves to be mentioned was the extraordinary hospitality of the Russian officers. Hospitality is a quality which is universal in Russia; it is equally remarkable in all classes; among officers, soldiers, moujiks, tinkers, and thieves.

Whenever one passed by an officer's quarters he invariably invited one to come and to partake of something, and however little he had for himself, he gave you of his best. It was quite extraordinary to see what a fuss they made about a guest. The first example I had of this was in the train from Kharbin to Mukden, when I was in General Holodovsky's carriage. I did not know him beyond a mere formal introduction at the railway station, and he at once sent me tea, biscuits, and a candle to read by. Every morning he sent his servant to see that I had everything I wanted, and one evening at Mukden when I told him that my foot was hurting me, he at once set out before I could stop him to get a doctor from the Red Cross. I wondered whether it was usual for generals to take such trouble about war-correspondents. But where it was more remarkable still was at the front when officers at once put the small luxuries they had at your disposal. They were not satisfied with your taking one helping or one glass, but

insisted on your satisfying yourself to repletion. I have already described the soldiers' hospitality; it was impossible to watch them eating without their at once offering you a share, and often I was glad of the offer. The officers who hung about the stations, and there were too many such men, were of a different order, and sometimes the fact of being a correspondent put one at their mercy.

The correspondents wore a red badge on their left arm, which often proved to be a red badge of suspicion. The badge had the drawback, which was in some cases an advantage, of putting one at the mercy of a casual inquisitive stranger, who regarded one as public property, a thing to be looked at like a penny-in-the-slot machine. This is the kind of conversation I constantly had with strangers:—

"What is that red mark on your arm?" (Very often they knew this, and the opening was varied. Sometimes it took the form of "Come here, correspondent.")

"I'm a correspondent."

"What country?"—"I'm an Englishman." (This produced a somewhat chilling effect generally.)

"What newspaper?"—"The *Morning Post*." (I find everybody knows the *Morning Post* by name, and considered it by far the most Russophobe newspaper.)—"Ah!" (effect bad).

Sometimes I made the acquaintance of someone

casually, and it was only in the course of conversation that the fact that I was a correspondent was known, the red badge being often confused with the badge of the Red Cross, which it in no way resembled. I found that in general the correspondent was regarded as a kind of Sherlock Holmes, and was credited with being aware of the plans of both armies by a process of induction. But one thing I have always found — I have found it in every country that I have travelled in, but more especially when one wore a red badge—that the man who at once comes up to one and effusively makes friends is a bore, and very often not a high-class person; and I often sat for hours at a railway station exchanging mirthless jests and drinking endless toasts in vile liquors with these importunate strangers. There were exceptions, of course, even to this rule. But the best sort of people were those I either met by accident or by introduction, but not those who went out of their way to make my acquaintance. The red badge not only attracted the military, but put one at the mercy of all the nondescript class of officials, clerks, merchants, Greeks, and camp-followers, and all such people who hang about an army. With such, however, it was easier to deal.

There was also another kind of officer, who to my mind was worse than the class who haunted the stations.

The type will be found in any army; in Russia it is more objectionable owing to the political situation of the people. The qualities that distinguish him are a violent and uncompromising Jingo spirit, a narrow mind, a blustering and swaggering manner. Officers of this kind talk of the privates as if they were brutes, utterly devoid of either intelligence or human feeling of any kind; whereas they little know how far more intelligent the private soldiers are than themselves. Such men fill one with a revolutionary spirit when one hears them talk.

Their counterpart exists, alas, all over the world, and they are responsible for some of the stupidest acts that have ever been committed. It is only fair to add that I met very few men of this type, and none in the corps to which I was attached.

To go back to my military life, I presented myself later on in the day to General Kossagofsky, who received me with the utmost cordiality, and gave orders that I should be provided with quarters, and everything that I wanted. I was installed with the intendant and the regimental doctor in a Chinese house, as the guest of the Staff, and told to make myself at home. There I spent three pleasant days, getting up at sunrise, and going to bed at nine; there was a lull for the moment in events, though every now and then we heard firing. I spent most of these days lying out in the fields

talking with the officers. On the evening of the 22nd, I rode into Ta-shi-chiao to see how things were going there. At dawn the next morning I was wakened by the noise of guns, which seemed to be very near. I made ready to ride out immediately, but my servant brought me the news that my pony had been stolen during the night. The house was infested with Chinese boys and mafoos (grooms), who were Christians and spoke French—two bad signs. I asked what steps had been taken to recover the pony. My servant said he had been to the police, who had inscribed in a book the names, ancestors, domicile, and religion of the horse and its owner, and that the necessary proceedings would be taken in due course. As this process seemed to be likely to involve delay, I adopted another. I took every Chinese in the house by the pigtail, and thrashed them one after the other, and said I would continue to do so until the pony was brought back. I also gave a small coin to one of the mafoos, a certain Vasili, who was the greatest scoundrel of the lot.

This sounds brutal and disgusting, but it was the only way to get my pony back; and had I not done so, I should have been taken prisoner by the Japanese, and sent home. In half-an-hour's time I was informed that the pony had returned of its own accord. It walked in at the gate with its headstall in perfect order, showing that it had not broken

loose. I started at once in the direction of the firing, but unfortunately this delay caused me to miss the first engagement.

The Japanese had advanced and opened fire from the hills due south of Ta-shi-chiao, and the Russians by the time I arrived—the position was roughly about ten versts from Ta-shi-chiao—had retired from the first position with insignificant losses. The general position was like this: From Ta-shi-chiao southwards a perfectly flat green plain extends to the south, flanked to the east and to the west by a range of kopjes; about ten miles due south there is also a range of hills. A road intersects the centre of the plain from Ta-shi-chiao to the south. To the west, in the centre of the plain, not far from the road, is an isolated kopje. To the east the range of hills is quite close to the road, to the west the plain extends for a considerable distance. The Russians retired from their first position, which was the range of hills due south, and established a battery to the east between their first position and their second position, which consisted of a high range of kopjes to the east. From this half-way position they opened fire on the Japanese, who were establishing a battery on the position just evacuated by the Russians.

The firing lasted about three hours and a half. The commanding officer stood on a small mound, the battery beneath him, some distance away.

Behind us a regiment of Cossacks was concealed in the tall kowliang. (Kowliang is giant millet, which grows so tall that a regiment can remain concealed in it, and could march, if the men picked stalks, as the army of Macduff marched on Macbeth, like a moving forest.)

On the east side of the road, about two hundred yards behind the mound, was an exiguous village. The Japanese made no answer to the Russian fire. After a time, in the scorching heat, I walked back to the village, where my pony was tied up with those of a detachment of the Red Cross. This was about noon. The Russian guns were firing steadily, and the noise was loud. I was talking to a man of the Red Cross whom I knew. "We shall retreat very soon," he said. I said I supposed the Japanese would fire on us as we retreated. "They have been firing on us for the last five minutes," he replied, and then I noticed that the house to which most of the ponies had been tied had been damaged by a shell, and on walking across the road I saw that a house on the right had been blown up.

Our firing ceased, and we began to retreat. One Cossack had been killed in the village. The Japanese fired on us as we retreated through the kowliang, but without doing any damage. A little further down we emerged on the open road, and were joined by a regiment of infantry which had also been concealed in the kowliang. Looking

round I saw that the little village was in flames. That was all that happened on Saturday.

As a big fight was expected the next day I rode into the town, and started in the evening to find my division. This was no easy matter, as it had rained in the afternoon, and the small streams had become impassable floods. I eventually found the Cossacks bivouacking in the village where they had been before. I shall never forget that ride through the kowliang, in a sunset which suffused the earth and sky with an unearthly softness, and later on in the moonlight, which seemed to be at pains to soothe the earth after the noise and dust and heat of the day of toil and fighting.

I slept on the side of the road in the lee of a wall, and woke with the first streak of day, while the morning star was yet bright and isolated in the stillness and the glimmer of the dawn. Nothing was audible. I had the ponies saddled, and was given some tea, hot potatoes, and eggs, by an officer. Then the sun rose, and almost with its first shaft of light firing was heard. I immediately made for the Russian second position.

The Japanese opened fire from the east, and soon afterwards from the south-east. The Russians had three batteries to the east, and three to the south-east, and later on one by the isolated kopje to the west. An artillery duel began, which lasted all day and until after sunset. The Japanese

were a long time in determining the Russian positions, and when they did so their shells did not manage to find the batteries themselves. I took up my position where the infantry and artillery reserve were in waiting by the village, and rode out now and then to see how things were going at different points. The shells were falling in the plain. Early in the morning a regiment of infantry was sent up the road southwards, but the Japanese opened fire on them and they retired to the village. The Red Cross were in attendance not far from one of the batteries, but during the morning I saw no wounded brought back.

The aspect of the field of action was briefly this. In the distance a low range of very soft blue hills, to the west a stretch of brilliant vivid green, out of which the cone of the isolated kopje rose. To the east dark green hills, with patches of sand, and at their base the brilliant green kowliang. In the centre the hot sandy road. Heat, blazing heat, everywhere. Not many trees—a few near the village—a cloudless burning sky, and a ceaseless deafening noise. The Japanese shells were bursting in puffs of brown and grey, and the sky was full of little clouds of smoke, as if someone was blowing rings of tobacco smoke across the mountains. Every now and then Cossacks appeared in the kowliang, or a shell would burst in the plain. In the evening I ascended one of the hills, but my

field-glasses had been carried off in the shifting transport of my division, and I could see nothing in detail, though the positions lay beneath me as clear as a map.

During nearly the whole of the day I was among the artillery of the reserve and transport and some detached Cossacks, and shared their midday meal. The more I saw of the Russian soldiers the more my admiration for them increased. More splendid fighting material it would be impossible to conceive. They will endure any hardships, any fatigue without a murmur. They take everything as it comes, smiling.

They have the supreme quality of making the best of everything good-naturedly, and without grumbling. Early on Sunday morning as I rode out to the position I fell in with a detachment of transport. They had never stopped for a moment's rest. They were exhausted and hungry, and had settled down to have their tea when the man (he was not an officer, or even a sergeant) who was in charge of them announced that they would have to do without tea as there was no time. The men merely remarked: "This morning we shall not drink tea," and I didn't hear a single grumble. Secondly, their good nature and kindness were quite extraordinary. I had endless examples of it on various occasions. During the journey which I have previously described I

was treated as a distinguished guest; but here, in the theatre of war itself, I experienced something different, and perhaps unique, that is the way they treat strangers whom they consider as equals. After a week's campaigning, wearing a very dirty Russian shirt, and having a half-grown beard, I was taken by the soldiers many times for a kind of detached private. One man asked me if I came from the Caucasus; another asked me if I was on leave. One Cossack asked my servant, when I was riding to the staff, where his master was; he pointed to me. "No," said the Cossack, "where's your master?" I said I was he. "I thought," he answered, "you were a simple (ordinary) man" (Prostoi chelovjek). I first noticed this owing to the fact that I was addressed by soldiers as zemliak or zemliachok, which in Russian is equivalent to the French word "un pays," and means countryman. It is especially used among soldiers as a familiar way of hailing somebody. I always hastily explained that I was a foreigner, an Englishman, and a correspondent, but that never seemed to make much difference.

They gave me of their best when they had got little for themselves, tea with two lumps of sugar, when sugar was precious. One man gave me a tin of soup, because, he said, I should want it in the evening. If I offered them money they refused it. When I said I was a correspondent

they at once asked me to foretell the future of the campaign in accurate detail, and were disappointed when I told them that I knew even less than they did of what was going on in the present, let alone the future. Once, when I was in Liaoyang, I had been given the receipt of a telegram on which the name of the person to whom the telegram had been addressed was written in Russian. I could not decipher the name, and asked the Censor's Cossack servant what it was. He patted me on the back and said, "No, little pigeon, I'm like you; I can't read, or write, *either*." (*Ja toshe nie gramotni.*)

Soon after noon, when one of the batteries was relieved, only three of its men had been wounded. All the morning the Japanese fire had seemed concentrated on this battery. In the afternoon firing began further east and west, and the Russians placed a battery near the isolated kopje. Towards six o'clock all firing on the west ceased. The spirits of the Russians rose as the day went on. The number of wounded was very small; men were brought in on stretchers every now and then, but most of them had succumbed to the sun, which was unbearably hot. I myself saw only five wounded men brought in, but I only had two batteries within the immediate range of my inspection. Towards sunset the Japanese fire had greatly diminished. Two batteries were said to be out of action. Their infantry had not shown itself. It seemed that their

advance was checked. The Russian batteries were intact. Firing ceased at nine o'clock in the evening. It had lasted fifteen hours without a moment's break. The Russian fire had seemingly proved most effective, while the behaviour of the men and the general management of the batteries were admirable.

When I arrived home at nine o'clock in the evening I was met by an extraordinarily ludicrous situation. Two Chinamen had just arrived to rebuild the church, and had pulled down the altar, and at the top of the ladder were working at a new frieze. The Chinese have no sense of time, and they began to work at nine o'clock in the evening, probably because they had been busied with other affairs during the day. Secondly, the two Montenegrins, Giorgio and Siacco, were quarrelling in the yard, and throwing brushes and pans at each other. Thirdly, one of the Chinese boys had prepared me a hot bath in the middle of the yard. A gunner arrived who had been fighting all day, sweating, grimy and extenuated with fatigue. He asked a Chinaman for a drop of water. The Chinaman told him to get out as quickly as possible. That was like a Chinaman. I gave him some hot tea with half a tumbler of cognac in it, and noticing that the building was a church, the gunner went in and said a prayer. Then I tried to stop the Montenegrins from quarrelling, upon which Giorgio said he would shoot me. They were both armed

to the teeth. I dismissed him from my service. He refused to go, alleging that he was Brooke's servant, and not mine (which was not true). Brooke had left two days previously, leaving his horses behind, and having meant to return in a day or two. I went into the town to find the police, and there I heard that a general retreat had been ordered, and that Ta-shi-chiao was to be evacuated. The news produced great depression, and seemed inexplicable. It was owing, I suppose, to the fear of the Japanese turning the Russians' left flank. And what had apparently happened was that each flank had considered itself unsupported. Many competent authorities, among others Colonel Goedke, maintain that the retreat was unnecessary. At the time it certainly seemed so. An instance of the untrustworthiness of the reports that come from the coast of China was furnished to me when I read a month later in the English newspapers that it was reported from Newchang that Ta-shi-chiao had been taken on Sunday night at the point of the bayonet.

When I learnt that the retreat had been ordered I saw that whatever happened the Montenegrin must stay, as I could not possibly take five ponies and two mules back to Liaoyang. (Brooke had left his horses at Ta-shi-chiao, meaning to return.)

I started the next morning with Mr Dourkovitch, a Polish artist, five ponies, two mules, two Monte-

negrins, and two Chinamen. The Montenegrins quarrelled as we started over a piece of string, and Giorgio called Siacco a mule; Siacco said that he wouldn't move a step out of Ta-shi-chiao. I finally pacified him and persuaded him to start. It was a blazing hot day. We soon passed through the town and station of Ta-shi-chiao. The transport was retreating, the station was ready for destruction, the buffet had sold out its last bottle of wine, and its last cigarette. The whole place had the appearance of a race-course the day after a race-meeting. Everything was empty and desolate, but there was no confusion nor disorder—not more than you would observe in an empty bee-hive where only the honeycombs remain. We followed the transport; but we met no retreating regiments; they were fighting a rear-guard action. Firing was audible at first, but not after eight o'clock. I was struck by the leisurely way in which the transport retreated. It seemed to go on comfortably and automatically without officers. I only met one captain from 6 A.M. to midday, and very few sergeants. Colonel Goedke, the military critic of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, remarked to me the next day that he too had been struck by the extremely calm manner in which the retreat was being conducted. "In Germany," he said, "it would probably be done more quickly, and more smartly, but there would be more cursing and swearing,

more fuss." It struck me that in this case the Slav temperament showed the qualities of its defects. The Russians with their habit of doing their duty in their own leisurely fashion like automata did it just as well without orders as with.

It grew hotter and hotter. At midday we rested for three hours under the shade of some trees. There were many wells on the road. At the beginning of the campaign I used not to drink water at all; then I used to put capsules of permanganate of potassium in the water; finally, on this march, and from that time forward, I drank any water that was to be got. The water must have been very good in Manchuria. Otherwise the whole of the Russian army would have been laid up with dysentery. The soldiers drank any water they could get, however dirty, and they eat a great quantity of raw cucumbers and unripe melons with the rind. There was very little dysentery, and the cases were, as a rule, not severe, and arose generally, I think, from people eating the horrible concoctions that came from Shanghai, or from drinking iced beer. While we were resting under the trees, Giorgio and Siacco quarrelled once more. Giorgio had been sulking during the whole of the morning, and the consequence was one of the mules was lost. A search had been instituted in the beanfields and kowliang. Finally one of the Chinamen found it.

We resumed our march about three o'clock in the afternoon and leaving the transport went by a road

over the hills. Towards six o'clock we again heard sounds of firing. We arrived at Haichen at seven o'clock in the evening. M. Dourkovitch went to the French missionaries and I sent my ponies thither also, intending to take the night train for Liaoyang. I arrived at the station and asked when the train started. "Nie iswiestno—It is not known," was the answer—an answer I knew so well. Being used to fifteen-hour waits at these Chinese stations I troubled little about the train, and being told that no one knew when it was to start I went to have some food. I thus managed to do what was very difficult in these times: to miss the train. I set out for the town. The gates were closed for the night. I returned to the deserted station half dead with fatigue. It began to rain. I fell on a chair outside the buffet; an official told me I must not sleep on that chair—anywhere else, but not there. I lay down on the ground of the platform a little further up. A soldier had been watching the proceedings. He waited till I was asleep, then he brought his own matting, lifted me up, put it under me, built a small tent of matting over me, and brought me a sack as a pillow. I woke up and protested against taking his belongings, but he insisted, and made himself comfortable with a greatcoat and a piece of matting. The next morning he brought me a cup of hot tea at dawn. I offered him a rouble. He refused it. I never saw him again, but his "little unremembered act" will never be forgotten by me.

CHAPTER V

THE RETREAT FROM HAICHEN

THE next morning I sent my ponies on by road and resolved to wait for the train. Nobody seemed to know what was happening. Firing was heard now and again. Some people said Haichen was to be evacuated immediately, and others that the decisive battle of the war would take place there. It was evident that a rear-guard action was being fought. The station was crowded with people. Food was still to be obtained. The lines were blocked with trains. A train was going to start for Liaoyang, but nobody knew when. After many hours' waiting I began to regret that I had not gone by road, when I heard suddenly that the train for Liaoyang had been made up and would set off immediately. I found that the train consisted of trucks and vans, only one or two of which seemed to be open to the public, and were being rapidly filled with soldiers and members of the Red Cross Service. Into two of the only other open vans—what was in the shut vans, of which there were about thirty, I did not ascertain—two soldiers were hurling bits of furniture, matting, and various odds

and ends. I tried to find a place in one of the vans, but was met with the cry, "There's no room here!" and, indeed, for once the exclamation was evidently founded on fact.

Next door, on the end of a shut van close to the buffers, two soldiers were standing with bayonets, guarding, apparently, a large bag of bread. "You can sit on this bag if you like," one of them said. I climbed up and watched the process of furniture-hurling which was going on in the next van. It was being carried on by two soldiers who were calling each other names which would not only be quite unprintable but seemed to be the last word of all abusive language. Since, however, the terms employed formed part and parcel of the every-day language of those men all their sting had gone. The coins were so debased by constant circulation that their intrinsic value had been long ago lost sight of. The process went on good-naturedly enough until one of the men called the other a sheep. This seemed to me to be the first harmless word which had been bandied during the conversation. The effect produced was tremendous. The man who was called a sheep threw down a plank he was handling and declared to the world at large that that was more than human nature could bear, that he refused to work with a man who called him a sheep, and that a man who called another a sheep without any reason or justification was fit to be

killed. All this was bawled out at the top of his voice and interlarded with terms of abuse to find equivalents for which it would be necessary to have recourse to the language of the East, and which reflected slightingly on the pedigree of the man addressed.

But again, these words were accepted as part of the vehicle of conversation, as indispensable ejaculations, such as "Good gracious!" The infuriated soldier finally called everyone to witness and exclaimed that here was a man who had called him a sheep, and who was a sheep himself. This seemed to me rather to spoil the argument. Two officers arrived and told the men to go on with their work, but the argument was still going on when the train started, and the last words I heard were "Sheep! sheep! He called me a sheep!"

Three other soldiers climbed up to the small platform where I was standing before we started. They went to sleep almost directly, and so did I. We arrived in a short time at An-san-san, the first and only station between Haichen and Liaoyang, without a stop, the distance being twenty-seven versts. Just before we got to the station I awoke with a start, and in so doing knocked one of the soldier's rifles out of the train. He was asleep, and as it took him a minute or two to awaken, neither he nor I realised immediately what had happened. When he did realise his loss his consternation was

tremendous. He was like Little Bill, the lizard, in "Alice in Wonderland," when his pencil was taken away during the trial; and the soldier took the rash course of jumping out of the train. I felt I was going to be responsible for his life when I saw him leap from the carriage to the line; but fortunately, we were not far from the station, and the train was not going much faster than a quick omnibus.

I arrived at Liaoyang in the evening, and stayed there till Sunday, the 31st July.

On Friday I heard rumours of fighting south, but I was prevented from starting by the fact that my pony was sick. I started on Sunday morning early for Haichen. The distance from Liaoyang to Haichen is fifty versts. It proved too hot to accomplish the journey in one day, and I passed the night at a small station—not a railway station—where the soldiers who guarded the line lived.

"Can I spend the night here?" I asked.

"Possible," was the laconic answer.

I rode up, unsaddled my pony, and let it graze. The sun had set, and it was almost dark, except for a hot red glow in the west. The earth seemed still to be breathing out heat. On either side of the house stretched an interminable green plain, intersected by the railway line. I lay down on the grass, not expecting anything further. I had had nothing to eat except four Chinese pancakes and some Chinese tea, which I had obtained in a Chinese village with

great difficulty, after a long argument among the Chinamen as to whether or not I was a Hun-hu-tse. I will return to the question of the Chinese and their dealings with travellers later.

The soldier in charge of the station—he was the "starshe," the "senior man," *i.e.*, the man in charge of the post of frontier guards, and he presently came and invited me to supper. It consisted of soup, meat, and brown bread, followed by tea. Five men partook of it. The senior man, my host, apologised for the insufficiency of the meal, and said it was the best he had to offer. He then went and brought his last remaining delicacies, some cucumber and two bits of sugar, putting both bits into my cup. I cannot give an idea of what a delicacy sugar was at this time at the front or on the march. The man also produced a still greater rarity, a small crystal of lemon extract, and insisted on giving it to me. I never enjoyed a supper more. I asked my host whether or not he had been a long time at this station. I thought he would say a week or so, but to my surprise he said four and a half years. Then all at once I realised the man's life, the life of a man in a land lighthouse, isolated in a plain in the south of China, at a place where the trains never stopped, and where European travellers must have been rare before the war.

We began to talk of various places and things. He was one of the most simple-minded and transparent characters I have ever met, with a gift of

hospitality which made me feel solemn. Is there not a line in Byron's *Don Juan* where "an Arab with a stranger for a guest" illustrates something ineffably sacred. That line came into my head. The man was not in the least like an ordinary soldier. He had a wide and at the same time a confused education, a bewildered knowledge of remote things and places. He told me about some hot springs which were near, and then said he had been at Aden, and talked of the Red Sea as being quite close. I said the Red Sea was near Egypt. One of the other men then remarked that he knew better, because he had been to school, and that I was thinking of the Yellow Sea.

I said I had been to school also, and had likewise been to Egypt. A third man observed that the Yellow Sea was a small sea which flowed into the Black Sea, and that the Red Sea lay indubitably between Japan and China.

"It is near Colombo," one of them explained. "I have been to Colombo."

"Does Colombo belong to Great Britain?" asked one. "Yes!" answered the other; "there are Englishmen in Colombo. Everything belongs to Great Britain, and they have now taken Thibet." "No!" rejoined another, "Colombo is near America, and belongs to America—at least so I have been told."

I was too exhausted to take any active part in the

conversation, or even to ask the senior man who and what he was. I could only drift on the stream of talk that was going on. After supper they made me a most comfortable bed with some hay and a blanket and a pillow out in the field.

"You will be more comfortable here than indoors," remarked the senior. "There are too many insects indoors."

He then brought me some more tea with his last little crystal of lemon extract, and wished me good-night. I thanked him for his hospitality. He then crossed himself, and bade me welcome in the name of heaven and the saints. I felt that I had met one of the characters in Hans Andersen's fairy tales. This man might have come, for instance, into that beautiful story of the "Travelling Companions." He had just that transparent, simple and infinitely benignant character which Andersen alone could depict. The fact struck Siacco, who was with me alone this time, and who remarked with awe that it was extraordinary to see what infinite trouble these people took to do honour to a guest.

I started at dawn the next morning, and arrived at eight o'clock at a village where the Red Cross was established. I had already met men belonging to the transport, who said they were retreating from Haichen and that there had been incessant fighting during the last three days. I was entertained by the Red Cross representatives and given tea and

eggs, and while I was there they arranged to retreat north at five o'clock that evening. I reached Haichen about nine o'clock. I found the place full of movement and excitement. There had been fighting during the last two days; fighting was still going on; the Commander-in-Chief and the Staff were there, and exciting events were expected.

About eleven o'clock firing was heard from a battery due south and quite close to Haichen. I rode out to it, but by the time I had arrived at the distance whence operations were visible the firing ceased. Another battery still nearer opened fire and ceased firing almost immediately. The batteries then retreated, and there was no more firing that day.

When I arrived at the station I was told that Haichen would not be evacuated, but that a big battle would take place on the morrow. In the meanwhile everything except the actual troops was rapidly clearing out of Haichen. At the same time the wounded were being brought in from the field ambulances to the sanitary train which was in the station. There were a great many wounded. Some were being brought in on stretchers, and others walked supported by soldiers on each side. Their wounds were quite recent. The manner in which this transport of the wounded was managed was admirable. It was done quietly, quickly and effectually.

This was the first time I saw the ghastly spectacle of maimed soldiers being carried in with their fresh bandages, recent wounds, white and yellow faces, and vague wondering eyes. Some of them were being carried on stretchers, others were walking, supported by soldiers on either side. The scorching sunlight beat upon them. "Non ragioniam di lor ma guarda e passa."

I have often heard the Red Cross organisation abused by Russian officers, but they seemed to me to ask a great deal. The sanitary trains, everyone admitted, were admirably organised, clean, comfortable and cool. Everyone admitted that the hospitals at Kharbin were beyond praise; and that the field hospitals were satisfactory. What was lacking was a sufficient means of transport to convey the wounded from the field of battle to the field hospitals, and to the ambulances; but since my return I have been told by military men here that that is a defect which it is almost impossible to remedy.

There existed what was called the Evangelical Red Cross Society, which consisted mostly of Germans from the Baltic provinces. This was an admirably managed institution. There were also flying columns of the Red Cross who bandaged the wounded under fire. Personally, I only came into contact with two of these columns, one of which I saw doing good work at Ta-shi-chiao,

and at Liaoyang. On the whole, they came in for a fair measure of abuse, it being said that they were never where they were wanted. Whether this is fair or not, I have no means of judging. The columns with which I was acquainted certainly did admirable work at Liaoyang. During the battle of the Sha-ho, the field hospitals were sometimes very far from the field of action, as when Lonely Tree Hill was taken; but I will come to that in due time.

To go back to my narrative. At noon on the 1st of August, a big battle was expected on the morrow. Everything seemed to point to this, and everyone seemed to be prepared for it. I spent the night in a small village about half a mile north of the station, and made all preparations for the next day. With me were Brooke, and M. Dourkovitch. We had scarcely laid ourselves down on an improvised bed in the yard of the small Chinese cottage where we were staying, when we were roused by a noise of shouting and cheering, which subsided after a time. About a quarter of an hour afterwards a rumour reached us—where and how it started I do not know—that the Japanese were in the village, and that we must make haste to get away, or else we should be cut off. We got ready, and rode out not very far from the village, and waited on a road in the moonlight. I sent Siacco the Montenegrin to find out what was the

matter, and he managed to get himself arrested as a Japanese, and only returned late on the following afternoon.

Siacco was a fair-haired individual with blue eyes. He was less like a Japanese than any one I have ever seen. But the Russian soldiers judged a man's nationality by his clothes and Siacco wore a straw hat. If you wore gaiters or spats the soldiers thought you were a Japanese. One day when I was wearing Stohwasser gaiters I was stopped by a frontier guard and asked in a tone of suspicion where I had bought that leg-gear. I answered Tokio, and was allowed to pass. If I wore a Russian shirt I was invariably taken for a Russian private. If I wore a Caucasian cloak (bourka) I was taken for an officer and saluted. The Chinese judged one by one's saddle if on horseback; that is to say, if one rode on a Chinese saddle they put one down as a Mafoo. Otherwise they were extraordinarily discerning even in the small villages in determining nationality—one might be dressed from head to foot like a Russian, and the Chinamen in passing by would say Englishman, Frenchman, or German, as the case might be.

Soon we met transport carts and Cossacks, and various detached soldiers. We gathered from the absolutely conflicting accounts of the troops, that somewhere—some accounts said half a mile off, and others five miles off—a false alarm of a night

attack had been raised, which had caused slight confusion in one part of the camp. Whether or not there had been an attack of any kind I never ascertained; but I think not. Certainly no shots were heard. What appeared to have happened was that the rumour of this false alarm had reached the retreating transport men who had exaggerated the occurrence, and thus created a panic. There were no troops in our village at all. In about a quarter of an hour all was perfectly quiet.

We were tempted to march to Liaoyang in the cool of the night, but on the chance of there being interesting events we remained at Haichen. I spent the night with a regiment of Siberian Cossacks. One fact appeared quite evident, namely, that the expected battle was not to happen, and that Haichen was to be evacuated. The next morning we rode back to Haichen Station; the infantry were retreating, and the evacuation was being carried out. I started back alone about noon, retreating with the infantry, men who had been under fire without ceasing for the last three days.

It was again a swelteringly hot day, and it was interesting to compare the retreat of the infantry compared with that of the transport. It was carried out in perfect order. When I arrived at the frontier guards' post, where I had spent the night on the way to Haichen, I found a whole

regiment resting. I had had nothing to eat, and I too lay down to rest. I was joined at four o'clock by Brooke, Dourkovitch, and Colonel Potapoff, who was one of the many Press censors. Later in the afternoon, Siacco the Montenegrin, turned up. I reached An-san-san about nine o'clock in the evening. The heat was torrid during the whole day. The wells had by this time become thick with mud after being stirred up by many hundreds of troops. I passed the night on the platform of An-san-san and started for Liaoyang the next day with Brooke, Colonel Potapoff, Siacco and two Cossacks. We could not find any food on the road. We told the Cossack to go and loot, but he returned empty-handed, and if a Cossack cannot find food, nobody can. While we had halted to rest at a clump of trees, a soldier suddenly turned up in a ragged shirt. He was a prisoner who had escaped from the Japanese. We asked him what the Japanese were like. He said they were "nichevo," * meaning they were all right.

Later in the afternoon Siacco crowned his inglorious career by three times falling off his pony; and when reproved for lagging behind, he in-

* "Nichevo" is the most important word in the Russian language. It means primarily: "Nothing." It also means: "It does not matter," and hence by extension, "It is all right." Applied, therefore, to a man it signifies: "He is all right."

sulted Colonel Potapoff. He was finally made to walk home, and we left him swearing that he belonged to the Orthodox Church, had fought the Turks, and would complain to General Kouropatkin. We reached Liaoyang at eight o'clock in the evening. I had never known what exhaustion meant until that evening. Among other things I had caught a slight sun-stroke. The next day I was laid up with sun-fever, and had to stay in bed for three days with ice on my head. I was again cured by Dr Westwater.

Siacco was finally dismissed.

CHAPTER VI

DAVANTIENTUNG

ON Monday, August 8th, I started once more on horseback with a new servant, Dimitri, a Caucasian, a dark-eyed brigand, with a black beard and a hawk nose, dressed like a Caucasian in a loose brown skirt with silver trimmings, cartridges on his breast, a revolver at his waist, and a large scimitar.

I was in search of General Kossogovski's division. At An-san-san I met a volunteer, who was also bound for the same destination. We slept at An-san-san, and started early the next morning for Davantientung, a village about ten miles south-west of An-san-san. It was not very easy to find the way; after we had passed through the first two or three villages we emerged into an ocean of kowliang. Fortunately there was a field telegraph, and Dimitri and I both insisted that it would be wise never to lose sight of it. It led us by strange pathways, over ditches, and through swamps; the volunteer fell into a ditch which his pony refused to jump, and I was nearly drowned in a swamp, but ultimately we arrived at Davantientung. Owing to the temporary indisposition of General Kossogovski the division was under the order of General Sichoff.

DAVANTIENTUNG

The general was sitting in a very small and incredibly dirty room of a Chinese fangtse (cottage). A telegraph was ticking in the next room, and flies were buzzing everywhere. "Have you brought us any food? We have nothing here, no bread, no sugar," were the general's first words. He told me to make myself at home, and to settle down where I liked. Some of the Staff lived in the cottage, in which there were two rooms, and others lived in the garden. I chose the garden, and during the first two days I thought I had chosen the better part, but after a time, as the Staff increased to its full complement, the garden was filled with horses and Cossacks, and there was little left but standing room. Life at the front consisted, if you except the battles, of bracing and exhaustive movement, or of complete and most languorous idleness.

I should like to be able to give some idea of these days of inaction and waiting in a Chinese garden or house during the entr'actes of the war. Everything was green and yellow. The weather was very hot to begin with; when it rained, which it did once every ten or twelve days, it was hotter. The roads and houses were made of yellow baked mud, on each side of which were endless stretches of kowliang fields of a very intense green—too green. One was reminded of the Frenchman's description of St Moritz, "Ce lac beaucoup trop

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bleu, ces arbres beaucoup trop verts." Along the horizon there was perhaps a range of mountains, or hills, very soft and blue and beautiful, so that one was reminded at the same time of Scotland and of Egypt. It is a strange country; it is also a beautiful country. That is to say, at every moment one is confronted with landscapes, and effects of light and shade which are intrinsically beautiful. Near Davantientung there was a lake of pink lotus flowers which, in the twilight, with the rays of the new moon shining on the floating, tangled mass of green leaf (the leaves by this light assumed a kind of ghostly grey shimmer), and the broad and stately pink petals of the flowers, made a picture which if Monet, the impressionist, could have painted, the public with one voice would have declared to be an exaggerated impossibility. But neither Monet nor any other painter could ever succeed in reproducing the silvery magic of those greys and greens, the phantasy wrought by the moonlight, the twilight, the radiant water, the dusky leaves, and the delicate lotus petals.

Yet, in spite of frequent beautiful sights, it was hard to enjoy the beauty of the country. Perhaps it was owing to the war—to the "pomp and circumstance of glorious war!" One recognised that the country was beautiful, but the beauty did not steal on one unawares, and fill the spirit with peace. I am talking not only of my own experience, but that

of many men, military and civil, whom fate threw together there. During these idle days the country seemed to overpower one with irresistible languor. In the yard outside the horses were munching green beans in the mud. Inside the "fangtse" all the flies in the world seemed to have congregated. One took shelter from them, in spite of the heat, under anything—even a fur rug. To eat and sleep was one's only desire, but sleep was difficult and food was scanty. Insects of all kinds crawled from the dried mud walls to one's head. Outside the window two or three Chinese used to argue in a high-pitched screech about the price of something. One lay stretched on the "k'ang," the natural hard divan of every Chinese house. There was perhaps a fragment of a newspaper four months old which one had read and re-read. The military situation had been discussed until there was nothing more to be said; nowhere was there any ease for the body, or rest for the eye.

An endless monotony of green and yellow, of yellow and green; a land where the rain brings no freshness, and the trees afford no shade. The brain refused to read; it circled round and round in some fretful occupation, such as inventing an acrostic. A French poet has described this languor in the following verses, which seem made for these circumstances:—

"Je suis l'Empire à la fin de la décadence,
Qui regarde passer les grands barbares blancs,

En composant des acrostiches indolents
D'un style d'or où la langueur du soleil danse,
L'âme seulette a mal au coeur d'un ennui dense,
Là-bas on dit qu'il est de longs combats sanglants."

But then, after all, the entr'actes, though they seemed as long as those of a French theatre, were in reality short, and how richly one was compensated, not only by the culminating moment of the battle, but by all the action which lead up to it, as soon as the curtain rose again. There was another side even to the days of languor. In the first place one got used to it. In the second place, it was often great fun. The officers were friendly, somebody used to arrive from civilisation with some sugar and some cigarettes, or with some exciting news. There was a constant stream of arrivals and departures to and from the Staff. I have memories of pleasant dinners outside, under a trellis-work covered with melon leaves, of delicious pancakes cooked by the Cossacks, and of many amusing incidents too trivial to tell. Above all, I have recollections of the general atmosphere of friendliness and good nature. During the whole of these periods, there was never a moment when I would have elected to be transported permanently elsewhere if such a thing had been possible.

General Sichoff himself, to begin with, was as friendly as possible. He was a knight of St George; that is to say, he had the St George's

cross of an officer. A private soldier can get the St George's cross of the fourth class for general good conduct in action. It merely shows that he is a good soldier. The officers' St George's cross is the highest Russian order, equivalent to our Victoria Cross. General Sichoff had seen many campaigns; he was a soldier of the old school; a man of great personal courage, and the universal verdict was that he was a "molodjetz" (which means a fine fellow). On his staff I found my friends of Ta-shi-chiao, including Alexander Ivanovitch Egoroff. We shared a small matting shelter, which did duty for a tent in the garden adjoining the general's fangtse. If Napoleon had commanded the Russian army, he would have put that man in command of an army corps.

There was also a young fellow called Dimitri Nikoliaevitch, who had lived some years in Turkestan, quite a young man, who struck me as being like one of the young officers capable of holding positions of great responsibility, such as Rudyard Kipling describes. I thought he was likewise remarkable for the sense that he talked, and his utter lack of swagger, and obnoxious "panache" of any kind.

After spending six days with the Staff, a change came about in my fate. One of the Staff officers had been transferred to another division, which was under Colonel Gourko, in a neighbouring village.

French, which he spoke hesitatingly, with an admixture of Chinese, but with the purest accent, a provincial accent smelling of the French soil. He gave us a glass of *fine champagne*, which had come from Monsieur Lestapi at Bordeaux, and was of the epoch of Louis Philippe. It was the only time I tasted anything good to drink during the whole time I was in Manchuria. It was wasted, however, on the doctor of the battery, because brandy, old or new, made him sick. He was obliged to drink it, so as not to offend. The priest then told us that he had never been in France, but had been taught by the French. There were many Catholics, he told us, in the neighbourhood. During the Boxer revolution he had been put in prison, and condemned to death, and led ignominiously to the scaffold; then he had been rescued or pardoned for some unknown reason, and eventually set free. We asked him if the Boxers would be likely to repeat such conduct. Nothing, he said, was more likely, but whatever they did they would be unable to make a single Chinese Catholic repudiate his faith; once converted, always converted, in spite of any inducement such as torture. The English missionaries told me the same thing about the Chinese Protestants, or Presbyterians, or Nonconformists. Once they are converted nothing will repervert them. They become invincibly obstinate. He gave us his blessing, and then we departed.

There was not a single European anywhere near the neighbourhood.

On the following day the battery received orders to move into the village of Davantientung, which I had just left. We moved into the village, and occupied and gently dismantled a large Chinese house. The owner cried quietly while we did so. He was comforted with roubles, after which he cried on every possible occasion, even when his own hens clucked in the yard. Here began another pause, a new entr'acte which was the prelude to a most exciting act. This was the first time I had actually lived with a regiment, a battery being the same as a regiment.

The commander of the battery, Colonel Philemonoff, was absent in hospital when I arrived. His place was taken by a Lieutenant Malinovski, a man who knew everybody in Manchuria, and who was as fat and jovial as Falstaff. Besides him there were Lieutenant Kislitzki, about whom I have much to say later; Lieutenant Kabwilkin, a fair-haired, blue-eyed boy from Transbaikal; Lieutenant Brand, a young European who had been transferred from a Russian regiment; Michel Pavlovitch Glinka, the doctor; and a veterinary surgeon. Besides them there was a young Polish volunteer, Count Tyszkiewicz, who, at the time I arrived, was a bombardier.

The remaining officers of the battery I met later.

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He invited me to go with him. The rain had begun to fall in torrents, and I was rather glad to leave our garden, which had been converted into a swamp. The village was not far off, and it was comforting to find a shelter in a house.

At last, I thought, the famous rainy season has begun. The rainy season is supposed to last a month, and to happen either in June, July, or August. Whether the year 1904 was abnormal or not I do not know, but the rainy season turned out to be like an exceptionally dry English summer, when it only rains from Saturday to Monday. During the month of August I noted that it rained on August 4th, 8th, and 9th (showers); again on August 14th, 15th, 17th, 27th, 30th (evening only). When it rained it poured, and during the intervals the weather was broiling hot, with the exception of three cold days—August 19th to 22nd.

I was most hospitably entertained by Colonel Gourko that evening, and, quite by chance, I also made the acquaintance of the officers of the 2nd Transbaikal Battery (Horse Artillery) of Cossacks, which was also stationed in the same village. On the following day the battery asked me to stay with them. I accepted their invitation. The following trivial incident led to my being invited to remain permanently with this battery. I had had supper with the officers, and we retired to bed. I un-

rolled my Wolseley valise on the floor of the fangtse. The doctor, who was looking on, said: "You mustn't sleep on the floor, you must sleep on the k'ang." I said I preferred to sleep on the floor, my reason being that I did not wish to crowd the officers on the already crowded k'ang. The doctor then called a Cossack, and said: "Lift Mr Baring in this bed on to the k'ang." Whereupon one of the officers, seeing that I really preferred sleeping on the floor, countermanded the order. This led to a discussion, as to whether he had the right to countermand the doctor's order, which lasted nearly all night, the question being complicated by the fact that the doctor said he had medical reasons for giving the order. The discussion was most violent, and ended in an arbitration, which in its turn ended in a compromise, and it was settled that the officer was technically right and morally wrong in cancelling the doctor's order; "but, since," they said to me, "you are *the cause* of all this, the least you can do is to stay here with us." So I did.

On the following day the doctor, another officer, and myself, set out on an expedition to visit a neighbouring village where we heard there was a Roman Catholic Church and a Roman Catholic Chinese priest. After some difficulty we found the village, and entered the vicarage. It was a scrupulously clean Chinese house, and there sat an old, bronzed Chinaman, reading his breviary. He greeted us in

French, which he spoke hesitatingly, with an admixture of Chinese, but with the purest accent, a provincial accent smelling of the French soil. He gave us a glass of *fine champagne*, which had come from Monsieur Lestapi at Bordeaux, and was of the epoch of Louis Philippe. It was the only time I tasted anything good to drink during the whole time I was in Manchuria. It was wasted, however, on the doctor of the battery, because brandy, old or new, made him sick. He was obliged to drink it, so as not to offend. The priest then told us that he had never been in France, but had been taught by the French. There were many Catholics, he told us, in the neighbourhood. During the Boxer revolution he had been put in prison, and condemned to death, and led ignominiously to the scaffold; then he had been rescued or pardoned for some unknown reason, and eventually set free. We asked him if the Boxers would be likely to repeat such conduct. Nothing, he said, was more likely, but whatever they did they would be unable to make a single Chinese Catholic repudiate his faith; once converted, always converted, in spite of any inducement such as torture. The English missionaries told me the same thing about the Chinese Protestants, or Presbyterians, or Nonconformists. Once they are converted nothing will repervert them. They become invincibly obstinate. He gave us his blessing, and then we departed.

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The remaining officers of the battery I met later.

We all lived in one room of a Chinese fangtse; our beds were stretched side by side along the k'ang. We got up at sunrise, and the ceremony of washing used to begin, a ceremony which I used to cut as short as possible. It is rude in the Russian army to shake hands with anyone before you have washed, and if you attempt to shake hands with an unwashed man he will withdraw his hand, saying that he has not yet washed. The washing ceremony is done in this fashion. You take off your shirt, and a Cossack pours water over your head and your hands out of a pewter cup, while you use as much soap as you please. After that tea used to be brought, a large kettle of boiling water with the tea made in it. The Cossacks used to cook a kind of thick pancake rather like a crumpet.

At twelve we used to have dinner, consisting of large chunks of meat, for hors d'œuvres, soup with rice and meat in it, and one dish of meat. This was followed by tea. The battery cook had one dish of which he was proud. He called it "Bœuf Strogonoff." It consisted of bits of meat cut up, and mixed with bits of chopped potatoes; the whole served in a pail. I recommend this recipe to Mrs Earle for inclusion in her next "Pot-pourri."

After a time, the battery struck at the constant repetition of this dish, and the cook was forced to vary his menu, and make cutlets, or something else;

but when left to himself he always went back to "Bœuf Strogonoff."

I used sometimes ironically to ask him whether there was going to be "Bœuf Strogonoff" for dinner; and he then used to answer confidentially, that on that particular evening it was impossible, but that I was to cheer up, as he would give it on the next day.

After dinner we used to lie on the k'ang, and talk, and sleep. There used to be more talk than sleep. The day used generally to be spent in one of those very long and very heated discussions, such as Tourgeneff describes in his novels; generally the conversation used to begin on the subject of the war, and wander off into Russian internal politics, *zemstvos* and all the things about which we have been hearing so much lately. I remember one day I was trying to write a letter to the *Morning Post*; but the discussion going on around me was so heated and so universal that all possibility of concentrating one's thoughts vanished. I finally ended by incorporating a part of the conversation in my letter and writing as it were to dictation.

The doctor was holding forth on the horrors of war and the absurdity, and the sickening spectacle of seeing all the complicated arrangements for the succour of the wounded.

The doctor argued as follows:—

"We create engines of destruction with the object

of inflicting the most deadly injury possible to our fellow-creatures, and at the same time we take the greatest possible pains to organise a system by which these same men, whom it is our object to destroy as swiftly as possible, may be restored to activity as soon as they have been once in any slight degree injured by our instruments of destruction. To carry on war on humanitarian principles is, if one comes to think of it, an absurdity. Your object in war is to kill, destroy, and damage the enemy as rapidly as possible, to let those who are whole and hale fight for all they are worth, and let the weak and the wounded go to the wall. Logically Red Cross organisations and field hospitals are a great hindrance and an unnecessary expense. If the fact of war be admitted, it should be waged as barbarously as possible, since a humane war is a contradiction in terms. It is like a humane boxing match—or a humane bull-fight."

"But," objected someone else, and I continued writing as if it were an afterthought of my own, "just as to fight and to wage war are an ineradicable instinct and a *raison d'être* of mankind, to succour the wounded is likewise an ineradicable instinct, and as long as armies exist Red Cross Societies will exist."

Then another, who knew his English and European history, broke in: "The battle-field of Creçy," he said, "after the battle, was probably as gruesome

a sight as a modern battle-field, yet the English," he said, pointing at me, "would no more part with the name of Creçy than we would part with any of the jewels of our national inheritance."

Here I could not help breaking in and saying that: "There was no more an ambulance or a hospital at Creçy than there would now be at a football or a cricket match in England at the present day. The French and the English fought for fun then, in the same way in which they now play football. War was then an aristocratic game. Witness the despatches of the correspondent on the French side — namely, Froissart. Was there ever correspondent more impartial, less blind to the faults of his own side, more enthusiastically appreciative of the enemy's qualities? But now nobody could say that the Japanese and the Russians were fighting for fun. Such incidents as the loss of the *Petropavlovsk* and the *Hatsusé* were merely desperately and fruitlessly deplorable and no more inspiring than a railway accident."

"Then," said the doctor, "you agree with me that if there is to be such a thing as war, it is illogical to have Red Cross organisations."

"No," I replied, "it seems to me the only redeeming feature of war."

"Why?" he asked, "You are exceedingly illogical."

"Possibly," I answered, "but it is so,"—and

everybody agreed with me and the discussion was closed.

In the cool of the evening we used to stroll out or go for a ride; at eight o'clock we had supper, consisting of one dish, and tea afterwards. Songs used generally to be sung, and then we went to bed early, and slept as long as the flies gave one peace.

During this time the Hun-hu-tses began to be troublesome. I thought when I was in Manchuria, that the British public must have been told and retold till they were sick of it what the Hun-hu-tses are, and no longer think them a special race of beings, like the hairy Ainus, with red beards, as I did when I left London in the days when I used to call them "Chan-chuses," but it seems to me on my return that the same impression still remains, and they are still called "Chan-chuses" which means nothing at all.

It has been explained, I suppose a thousand times, that "hun" means red and "hutse" beard, or *vice versâ*. The Hun-hu-tses, who used to be a corporation of polite blackmailers of the rich mandarins, utterly indifferent to foreigners, respectable, advanced in opinions, and wanting in cohesion, like the Liberal party in Great Britain, have, since the war, changed their character, and increased their recruits. But up to this moment they had been little heard of. In August, however, in the whereabouts of Davantientung, they began to be troublesome, and fired on the lonely traveller,

on the isolated Cossack, and, indeed, killed three gunners.

A subtle change had come over the Chinese in this district. I said in the preceding chapter I would allude later on to the attitude of the Chinese in the villages. The Russians have treated the Chinese as friends and brothers, and have paid them six times too much for everything, have felt no antipathy for their yellowness, and been a great source of profit. As long as Russian prestige was intact, such treatment merely made everything smooth. But after a few Russian reverses the Chinaman became insolent. Riding to Haichen, I found the Chinese most hospitable in the villages—hospitable at once. On my return with the retreating army it was only by explaining that I was an Englishman I could get a morsel of millet; in fact the Chinese would open their doors to the French, Germans, or Americans, to any one except the Russians—and the Swiss and the Belgians, for whom, for some unexplained reason, they have a mysterious aversion.

The Russians began to say "What fools we are. We treated them far too well." But where the trouble lay was not in the question of treatment—consistent or inconsistent—but in the fact that the war was continuing, causing increased distress among the Chinamen, and the prestige of Russian arms was diminishing.

CHAPTER VII

THE BATTLE OF LIAOYANG

ON the 23rd of August I rode into Liaoyang to post a letter. I was accompanied by an officer and six Cossacks as a protection against the Hun-hu-tses, who had been giving trouble lately. Indeed, officers had been warned to go by train from An-san-san to Liaoyang, and not to ride without an escort. I could not help reflecting that the Hun-hu-tses could aim at one as well from a distance whether the Cossacks were present or not. The presence of an escort did, however, have a deterring effect on the Hun-hu-tses, although Brooke was attacked one day quite close to Mukden, and two of the officers in the battery to which I was attached were shot at within a mile of their quarters (this was later).

For my own part I never saw a Hun-hu-tse, except a retired one who lived at Mukden. This man, who used to live at peace with his neighbours at a temple at Mukden after a life of rapine and murder, invited me to go and stay with the Hun-hu-tse general, who was celebrated for his bright clothes, his daring, his elusiveness, and his exquisite

cruelty. He assured me that I should suffer no harm, and would be treated with the respect due to the English and the insane. Tempting as the offer was, I felt compelled to answer that war correspondents were not supposed to incur unnecessary risks. It sometimes happens that Chinese of high rank join the Hun-hu-tses, men with advanced views, who are dissatisfied with the existing order of things. The Chinese use the word Hun-hu-tse for any sort of robber or rowdy man. It is equivalent to the word hooligan.

On the day after my arrival at Liaoyang (August 25th), heavy fighting was reported to be going on in the east. In spite of the temptation to go eastwards, I resolved to go back to the battery in the south, as it seemed to me inevitable that a big fight in the south must take place soon. On the next day (August 26th) firing was heard to the south in the morning, and I started alone for An-san-san. When I reached An-san-san at 4.30 in the afternoon, there was a great stillness everywhere. I passed a regiment of Siberian Cossacks encamped on the right of the railway line, and a battery of Eastern Siberia ready for action on the hills on the left of the line. Firing was going on, at this time, beyond the hills; the 3rd Transbaikal battery fired; and the 2nd was ready for action, but it was not audible at the station. I was afraid my battery would have moved; besides which the road to Davantientung was exceedingly

complicated, and I had got no Cossacks to guide me. However, a most civil officer on the Staff of the First Corps drew me a map of the way, and I started due west along the big range of hills. Here I also passed a battery placed along the road ready for action. I passed two of the villages marked on the map successfully, and then I followed the field telegraph, and soon lost the road marked. All went well until I reached a certain spot which I remembered having passed the first time I went to Davantientung. I saw a slight kopje in the distance in front of me, about five miles to the south, and recognised it with joy. Instead, however, of making straight for this hill, some instinct made me go back and proceed due west, in the hopes of finding the main road. I was afterwards told that the Japanese had occupied the hill I nearly made for, and fired thence on the next day. Whether this is so or not, I have no means of ascertaining; but they cannot have been far off.

I knew whereabouts my village lay, and I hoped by going a long way round to reach the main road which I had missed. I came on a village, and asked the way. The Chinese were standing outside their houses in the twilight, and when I asked them the way, they pointed and grinned ironically. I thought they were misleading me, and that I was making straight for a nest of Hun-hu-tses. I offered a small boy a coin if he would guide me. He pointed me out the road,

and led me part of the way, and then disappeared, and I found myself in a sea of kowliang. I felt uneasy, but resolved to go straight on till I came to a village of some kind. I knew I was going in the right direction, and after a time I came on a village, and met a Cossack. I asked if the battery was near, and he pointed to the very first house. By accident I had stumbled on the very house in which the battery was located. It had been out ready for action all day, and had moved its quarters.

I found, on arriving, that Colonel Philemonoff, the commander of the battery, had returned from the hospital. I knew of him by reputation, since he was reputed to be the best artillery officer in the whole of the Siberian army. He was ill, and suffering greatly from an internal disorder; but nothing ever overcame his indomitable pluck. We had supper, and went to bed. At two o'clock in the morning we were roused with the information that we were to start at once, as the Japanese were advancing on to our village. We got up; the officers and men collecting in a field in the darkness. It was raining. We marched to the largest village in that district. Towards the middle of the day the rain stopped, and we had just finished our mid-day meal when we were told to get ready for action. The battery was taken outside the village, and the guns placed in a kind of kitchen-

garden pointing south-west, towards Davantientung, the village we had just left. Colonel Gourko, who was commanding the cavalry division, consisting chiefly of dragoons, rode up, and made a short speech to the men. The weapons and the uniforms were modern, but the sentiment and the shouted answer of the Cossacks—crying out the regulation formula hailing their Colonel—were old. The mounted Cossacks, indeed, might belong to any epoch, and could have fought at Agincourt or Ravenna. Then the battery began to fire, and went on firing for about three hours, from about two till five in the afternoon. The Japanese made no response at first; they fired a little later on, but no shells reached us. It turned out afterwards that we had both been shelling the village of Davantientung in vain. I was sorry for the village where I had spent so much time, and for the lachrymose host whose house I had occupied. We were told to move into a village about a verst distant. There we occupied a small Chinese temple, and I was just dropping off to sleep on a mat when I heard a stir outside. The Japanese were less than a mile from us, and had entered one end of the village we had just left, while the dragoons had gone out at the other. Our force was very small—a detachment of dragoons, and the battery. The rest of the division had left earlier in the morning. We heard shots, and the battery was told to get away with all

possible speed. There was no panic, and, in spite of the shocking condition of the roads, we got away quickly and effectually, having narrowly escaped being cut off. We marched until twelve o'clock at night, then rested, and at dawn started for Liaoyang by a circuitous route to the west. We arrived at Liaoyang about three o'clock in the afternoon, and established ourselves in a small village on the railway line about four versts from the town, that is to say on the right flank of the army. The next day (August 29) was one of complete calm; we sat in a Chinese cottage, and ate pancakes. I rode into the station in the afternoon, and was told that a battle was expected on the following day, and that it would perhaps begin that very night. It was a divine evening. A little to the south of us was the big hill of Sow-shan-tze; in front of us to the east a circle of hills; to the north the town of Liaoyang. A captive balloon soared slowly up in the twilight; a few shots were fired by the batteries on the eastern hills. We were the farthest troops south-west.

By nightfall we had not received orders where we were to go. We lay down to sleep, and in the battery itself nobody was convinced that the Japanese would attack on the following day. We had scarcely lain down, however, before orders arrived for us to move to a village eastwards. The horses were saddled, and we marched to a village

up on the hills east of Sow-shan-tze, about four or five versts distant. There we again established ourselves in a Chinese house, where I lay down and fell into a heavy sleep. I was awakened by the noise of musketry not far off. There were faint pink streaks in the eastern sky. The village was on an elevation, but higher hills were around us. Musketry and artillery fire was audible. The battle had begun. We moved out of the village to a hill about a hundred yards to the north-west of it; here there was an open space consisting of slopes and knolls, but not high enough to command a view of the surrounding country. Two regiments of infantry were standing at ease on the hills, and as General Stackelberg and his staff rode through the village at the foot, the men shouted the salutation to him. I believe most of the men thought he was the Commander-in-Chief. On some rocks on the knolls groups of officers were standing surveying the position through their glasses. The whole scene looked like the picture of a battle by Detaille, or some military painter. The threatening grey sky, splashed with watery fire, the infantry going into action, and the men cheering the general as he rode along in his spotless white uniform. And to complete the picture, a shell burst in a compound in front of us, where some dragoons had halted. We had been ordered to leave the little village just at the moment when tea had been made,

and there seemed to be no further prospect of food.

We presently moved off to the west, and the battery was placed at the extreme edge of the plain of millet west of the hill of Sow-shan-tze. The battery opened fire immediately, the commander giving his orders high up on Sow-shan-tze Hill to the right, and transmitting them by men placed at intervals down the slope. The whole battle occupied an area of nearly forty versts in circumference. If one climbed the hill, which I did, one saw beneath one a plain of millet and little else. It was an invisible battle, and perhaps the loudest there has ever been. I climbed up the hill after I had stayed with the battery below for some time, and watched the effects of our fire. We were firing on a battery to the south-west at a distance of five versts, a range of about 5000 yards. I could see the flash of the Japanese guns through my field-glass when they fired. Every now and then you could distinguish, in a village or a portion of the plain where there was no millet, little figures like Noah's Ark men, which one knew to be troops. It was impossible to say, however, whether they were Russian or Japanese. Indeed, at one moment we fired on a village, convinced that the troops which had been visible there for a moment were Japanese. Soon after we received a message to tell us not to fire on it as our men were there.

It was a bad day for artillery, because the sky was so grey that it was difficult to distinguish the shells as they burst. On the side of the hill was Colonel Philemonoff and with him were Lieutenant Kislitzki, and the doctor. The colonel was too ill to do much himself, and during the greater part of the day it was Kislitzki who gave out the range. Kislitzki was not second in command. He was a young man twenty-five years old; but his knowledge of gunnery and his talent—amounting to genius—in discovering the enemy's batteries and estimating ranges were so exceptional, that when the Colonel was too ill to work he put everything into this young fellow's hands.

From Renan's translation of Ecclesiastes it appears that the phrase "the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong," means that when runners are needed for a race, the swiftest are not always asked to compete, nor are the strongest men given an opportunity when there is an occasion for a fight. Here was a case to the contrary.

The colonel lay wrapped up in a Caucasian cloak on the side of the hill, and every now and then, as he gave out, checked, or slightly modified Kislitzki's orders.

The three men who struck me most of those I met in Manchuria were Egoroff, whom I have

already mentioned, Colonel Philemonoff, and Kislitzki.

I cannot conceive it possible to be pluckier than the colonel was, both in his utter disregard of danger, and in the manner he endured terrible suffering without giving in.

Kislitzki was certainly the most brilliant officer I saw; the most cultivated and thoughtful; he knew his business, and loved it. It was an art to him, and he must have had the supreme satisfaction of the artist when he exercises his powers, and knows that his work is good. He was also absolutely fearless, and without the suspicion of thought for himself, or his career, or what would be advantageous to him. He was responsible for the battery's splendidly accurate firing in nearly every engagement; but he has not got the credit, nor does he need it; his wages were fully paid to him while he was at work. Moreover, any reputation that accrues to Colonel Philemonoff is deserved, because he created the battery, and the officers were his pupils, and his personal influence pervaded it. He was always there, and ready, if things went badly, to surmount any amount of physical suffering to deal with the crisis. He also loved his profession, and was the top of it, and it was bitterly ironical that now, when he had such a great opportunity for exercising his skill that he was too ill to avail himself of it.

One day when he was lying on a hill in command of the battery in action and had sunk back exhausted on to the grass, he said to me, "I love my business; and now that we get a chance of doing I can't—all the same they know I'm here and if any difficulty—any crisis arose, they know that no physical pain would prevent me from doing all I could."

Kislitzki, however, equalled him, the Cossacks used to say he was an "eagle."

As the time went on, the Japanese attack moved slowly like a wave, from the south to the south-west, until in the evening about seven o'clock, they were firing west of the railway line, and the Russian infantry was lying along the line. The battery ceased fire, and then three of the guns were taken on to the top of the small hill which lay at the foot, and west of the big hill of Sow-shan-tze, and fired due west. A Japanese battery was supporting the attack of its infantry. After a time it was silenced. It was a picturesque sight to see the guns firing towards the red setting sun, over the green kowliang in which the Japanese infantry was advancing, and breaking like a wave on a rock.

Towards sunset it had begun to rain. All day the Japanese had been firing on us, but their shells fell to the right of us in the millet; every now and then a shell burst over our heads behind us,

but on the evening of the first day we had had no losses of any kind. At five o'clock I was sitting on the edge of the road with a young officer, Sub-Lieutenant Hliebnikoff, a born Trans-baikalian, of the battery, who had been shouting orders all day in command of a section. He was hoarse from shouting, and deaf from the noise. I was also deaf from the noise. We neither of us could hear what each other said, and shared a frugal meal out of a small tin of potted meat. A soldier near us had his pipe shot out of his mouth by a bullet. I shouted to him that we were in rather a dangerous place; he shouted back that he was much too hungry to care. At nightfall firing ceased. The result of the fight at the end of the day seemed to be distinctly favourable to the Russians. By sunset the Japanese attack had been driven back. From the spectator's point of view everything was spoilt by the dense, tall kowliang, or giant millet; from a hill you could see the infantry disappear into the kowliang; you could hear the firing, and the battle seemed to be going on underground. One seemed to be in a gigantic ant-heap where invisible ants were struggling and moving. In the evening the result became apparent in the stream of wounded and mangled men who were carried from the field to the ambulances. At sunset, if one could have had a bird's-eye view of the whole field, it would have given one the

idea of a hidden and bleeding heart, from which, like the spokes of a wheel, red arteries composed of the streams of wounded on every road, radiated in every direction.

That first evening there was already a terrible procession wending its way to Liaoyang; some men on foot, others carried on stretchers. I met one man walking quietly. He had a red bandage round the lower part of his face, his tongue and his lips had been shot away. The indifference with which the men bore their wounds was quite extraordinary. On the left of the road which goes along the railway line to Liaoyang, a section of the Red Cross was stationed. The wounded were brought there after they had received preliminary attention from a flying column of the Red Cross, which nearly all day was stationed at the base of the Sow-shan-tze Hill. This flying column rendered splendid service. The doctors and their assistants followed the troops on horseback, and were the first to attend to the wounded. Nightfall found us sitting on a small kopje at the base of the Sow-shan-tze Hill; it had rained heavily; there was no prospect of shelter for the night.

Colonel Philemonoff was sitting wrapped up in his Caucasian cloak. A Cossack had been sent out to the village of Moe-tung, which was about three hundred yards to the west of the Sow-shan-tze Hill, to find a Chinese house for us, and to make

tea. He did not return, and Kislitzki and I set out to find him. We came to a house and found a number of soldiers warming themselves round a fire in a room to the left. The Cossack met us with the news that there was no room to be found, since the rooms on the left were occupied by Japanese prisoners, and those on the right by the Russian dead. There was, indeed, in the yard, a kind of shed, full of dirt and refuse, to which he pointed. Kislitzki was a man who was quite extraordinarily fastidious with regard to cleanliness and food; he would rather starve than eat food which displeased him, and stand up in the rain than sleep in a hovel. This the Cossack knew. Kislitzki went away in disgust. I remained warming myself by the fire on the threshold of the house. Soon five or six officers of an infantry regiment arrived hungry and drenched.

The Cossack met them, and said the whole house had been engaged by the commander and officers of the 2nd Transbaikal Battery, who would presently arrive, and the officers left in disgust and despair. Then I went back to the battery on the kopje, and it was settled that we should remain where we were. After a while the doctor and Hliebnikoff asked me to take them to the house to see what could be done. Kislitzki had disappeared. We returned to the house, and on the left of the yard lights were burning in a room which we had not been shown

before, and there were the Cossack and his friends enjoying a plentiful supper of cheese, sausages, hot tea, and a bottle of vodka. I admired the marvellous cunning of the Cossack, who had caused everybody to leave the house, and reserved it for himself and his friends. The doctor, Hliebnikoff, and I occupied the Cossack's room, and ate a part of his opulent supper, and then we lay down to sleep. At one o'clock we were awakened by bullets which were uncomfortably near. The Japanese had attacked the village. I saddled my pony, and made for the battery, but I lost my way and fell into a pond, and was soon wandering at random in the kowliang. That was the most uncomfortable moment I experienced during the battle. I made for the east, and struck one of the main roads leading to Liaoyang. There I met a wounded soldier, groaning in the kowliang, unable to walk. He implored me to save him from the Hun-hu-tses, I lifted him on to my pony, and started to try and find the Red Cross. He was wounded in the chest. We went very slowly over the muddy road. It had stopped raining, and the moon had risen. The wounded soldier said the fighting had been desperate; he had been in a hand-to-hand fight. The Japanese fought splendidly, he said, but were too small to manage bayonets, and did not understand them. After a while he said, "Tell me, little father, what made the Japanese get so angry with us?"

We found the Red Cross, which was located in a temple, and there the man's wound was rebandaged. I slept in the yard of this temple on some stones, near a fire. The firing had ceased, so I gathered the attack had been checked. With the very first stroke of dawn, the booming of a gun was heard to the east, a deep, steady boom, which seemed like that of a siege gun. By the time the sun rose heavy firing was audible to the west. I resolved to go back to the battery, but it was necessary first to feed my pony.

Dimitri, the Caucasian, had left my service the day I rode into Liaoyang, finding the life too uncomfortable. I went into a kowliang, where Cossacks were getting fodder for their horses, and borrowing a sword from a Cossack, tried to mow the stiff kowliang with indifferent success. At last I was reduced to pulling it up by the roots.

On returning to the battery, I found them in the same position they had occupied the day before, but the guns had been shifted so as to point west. On the small kopje the firing was at a closer range, and the Japanese had partially regained in the night the ground they had lost the evening before. Moreover, they had discovered the whereabouts of the battery, they had got the range, and were firing on us heavily. One man was wounded soon after I arrived. He was bringing a pail of tea on horseback, and he went on carrying the tea after he had

been shot. The men served the guns admirably. I watched them for some time, and then I crossed the road, climbed the small kopje, and found the colonel and Kislitzki. The Japanese were firing from a battery about three versts off. This was my first experience of prolonged shrapnel and shell fire; the shell burst on the road, and on our kopje, behind, in front, and all round us. The shrapnel exploded too high. The shells made a noise just like rockets, and those that exploded near us smelt horribly nasty. I ascertained that Hliebnikoff, the young sub-lieutenant, had been wounded in the night, and sent to the hospital. The time seemed to pass very quickly, as if someone was turning the wheel of things at a prodigious, unaccustomed speed. When our own guns fired a salvo, and the enemy's guns burst at the same time, I felt sometimes as if the world was falling to pieces, and one's head seemed like to split. Most of the men had cotton-wool in their ears. This went on till about one o'clock, when a pause occurred. I left the kopje, and sought a safer place near the horses; then I went to see what was happening in other parts of the field.

Eastward, the firing was loud and incessant. A long stream of wounded was flowing to the Red Cross, and from thence to Liaoyang. The ground was strewn in some places with bandages soaked in blood. Some men were walking with the blood

soaking through their bandages; others were carried on stretchers.

Near the station of the Red Cross ambulances were starting for the town. The noise seemed louder than ever. I was quite deaf in one ear. I remained for the rest of the day near the Red Cross. After a while I thought I would go back to the battery, and I inquired of an officer whether it was still in the same place. He told me that it had moved, and been taken west. This I afterwards found out was not so. It remained in its old position until nine o'clock in the evening, having fired more or less during the whole day.

Fighting was going on all round, though nothing was visible. Every now and then I saw troops disappear into the kowliang. The attack on the right flank on the railway line had shifted further north. It lasted until nine o'clock in the evening. The Japanese not only did not succeed in breaking through the lines to the west, but they were driven back two miles. To the east they took a trench which was never retaken. Then, owing to Kuroki's turning movement in the east, orders were issued to retire at ten o'clock that evening. On the following morning the 10th and 13th Corps had crossed the river to join the 17th and the 5th Corps. Liaoyang, with its triple line of defences, was left to defend itself, while the rest of the army crossed the river. It was a terrible battle, and in itself

neither a victory nor a defeat for either side. The losses on both sides were enormous, the bravery displayed on both sides prodigious. Some of the Russian infantry had fought for forty-eight hours without ceasing, and without bread. And though the battle of Liaoyang was over, the fighting had not ceased. All through the night of the 31st the Japanese attacked the forts; a Cossack officer, who was in one of these forts, told me that the sight was beyond words terrible; that line after line of Japanese came smiling up to the trenches to be mown down with bullets, until the trenches were full of bodies, and then more came on over the bodies of the dead. An officer who was in the fort he described went mad from the sheer horror of the thing. Some of the gunners went mad also.

I rode back to the town towards evening; on the way I met Brooke, who had been with General Stackelberg. We turned back to watch some regiments going into action towards the east, and then we rode back to Liaoyang with the streams of ambulances and stretchers, and wounded men walking on foot. The terrible noise was still continuing. I thought of all the heroes of the past, from the Trojan war onward, and the words which those who have not fought their country's battles, but made their country's songs, have said about these men and their deeds, and I asked myself—is that all true; is it true that these things become

like the shining pattern on a glorious banner, the captain jewels of a great crown, which is the richest heirloom of nations, or is all this an illusion, is war an abominable return to barbarism, the emancipation of the beast in man, the riot of all that is bad, brutal, and hideous ; the suspension and destruction of civilisation by its very means and engines, and that those songs and those words which stir our blood are merely the dreams of those who have been resolutely secluded from the horrible reality ? And then I thought of the sublime courage of Colonel Philemonoff, and of the thousands of unknown men who had fought that day in the kowliang without the remotest notion of the why and wherefore, and I thought that war is perhaps to man what motherhood is to woman, a burden, a source of untold suffering, and yet a glory.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RETREAT FROM LIAOYANG

THE evening and night of the 31st Brooke and I spent at Colonel Potapoff's house, one of the little government brick houses near the station. Some people arrived later, bringing the latest news from the field of battle, which was that the Japanese had been driven back towards the west.

The next morning when we awoke we heard no noise, no firing—Colonel Potapoff went out to see what was happening. He returned with the news that a retreat had been ordered. I went to the telegraph office to send off a despatch to the *Morning Post*. It was entirely dismantled, and they were about to move into a railway carriage; the telegram was accepted and paid for—it was a long and expensive one—but it never reached London. An hour later that office was shelled. Firing began and we were told that the new town would soon be shelled. Brooke, Colonel Potapoff and I had our horses saddled and put all our belongings on a large Chinese cart, and we set out with two Chinese boys. It was a

fine hot day. We rode out of the town and reached a Red Cross hospital, which was just outside the town; there Colonel Potapoff had some business and I waited for him—Brooke, who was riding with the cart behind us, was to meet us at the bridge on the river. I waited some time at the Red Cross, and we had a little food there with one of the doctors. Then we started again. We arrived at the river. There were no signs of Brooke nor of our Chinese cart. We waited there two and a half hours and then we crossed the river. Hundreds of carts, transports and trains were crossing the bridge. We afterwards learned that Brooke had gone back into the town.

I wanted to find the battery and met one of the Cossacks who belonged to it; but all he told me was that it was somewhere to the left. We proceeded on our march; a little later in the afternoon we met two French correspondents: M. Roucouli of the *Temps*, and M. Nodeau of the *Journal*; they had lost all their luggage during the bombardment of the new town, which had begun soon after our departure.

We arrived at a siding where a train stopped; it was full of stores; not Government stores, but the remains of the Greek stores at Liaoyang, and the provisions of the "international hotel" and other European shops. To my great joy the soldiers looted it, hurling bottles of beer and packets of

cigarettes and tobacco from the train to their comrades below. I drank one of the bottles of beer, and we took away others and resumed our march to Yantai.

We passed the night with the officers of a regiment of Siberian Cossacks which was bivouacking in a field not far from the railway line. The firing was still going on. At night we saw a great blaze—as if the whole town were on fire—it turned out to be only one building. Nobody knew what was happening. The people who were with me took a pessimistic view of things. We thought things were much worse than they were; that the forts would fall in the night and that Kouropatkin would be cut off. It was owing to the complete ignorance of the state of affairs which we all shared that caused me to miss the fight at Yantai.

We thought there was going to be a retreat beyond Mukden to Tie-ling. The next morning I saddled my pony and determined to ride to Yantai. Nobody knew what had happened at Liaoyang. Troops and transports were retreating, but firing was audible to the west and to the east of us.

Finally I left my pony with Colonel Potapoff who had got an horseless Cossack with him, and resolved to go to Mukden by train. I walked down to the siding. On the right of the railway line one

of the large Red Cross tents was pitched, and the wounded were being bandaged. Three infantry soldiers arrived exhausted with fatigue and sat down near me. I asked one of them how he had left things. He told me he had been fighting for the last three days without stopping, and had nothing but a few dried biscuits to eat. He told his story with enthusiasm. I asked him whether he had been in a bayonet encounter. He answered: "Yes, again and again, hand to hand."

"Do the Japanese fight well?" I asked.

"I should think so," he answered, "they are *molodtzi*" (fine fellows), and he described to me, as others had done, how they came again and again to the charge.

At that moment an officer came back and abused this poor fellow for sitting down to rest. "You are one of those cowards, I suppose," he said, "who are going back to Kharbin in order to tell them there that we have run away."

"No, your honour," the man answered, and I felt sick at heart.

Then Kouropatkin's train arrived empty. I obtained leave to go in it and arrived at Yantai station. By Yantai station a part of the 1st Russian Corps was stationed, all spic and span in their new green uniforms and freshly-painted green carts.

There I saw the French correspondents and

Colonel Goedke; but nobody who seemed to know or who could tell me what was happening. I had burnt my boats by leaving my pony behind, and was obliged to return to Mukden. That afternoon occurred the fight at Yantai.

I arrived the same evening at Mukden, and sent to an hotel which had been inaugurated by a Chinaman called the Manchuria Hotel. There I found Mr Hands the *Daily Mail* correspondent, and M. de Jessen the Danish correspondent of the *Berlinske Tiedende*. It was a big, spacious building with two courtyards. It started by being an hotel, and ended by being the private residence of the war correspondents.

I arrived at Mukden on September the 2nd. One by one all the other war correspondents arrived—Colonel Goedke, M. de Lasalle, the correspondent of the *Agence Havas*, etc., etc. Brooke arrived on the 6th. The authorities at Mukden expected an immediate retreat on Tieling. The Russo-Chinese bank moved to Tieling; the telegraph office was in the train, ready to start at any moment; and everybody expected to be awakened one fine morning by the bursting of Japanese shells.

We had made arrangements to retreat to Tieling, and we thought that it was merely a question of hours. However, the days passed, and nothing occurred, and in spite of rumours emanating from the Chinese, that the Japanese were five miles off,

nothing happened. After a week of doing nothing I began to find the inaction tedious. My battery had disappeared. Some people told me it had gone to Kharbin to rest; others, that it was at Tieling. As a matter of fact it had gone to Kuan-cheng-tze, which is not far from Kharbin, by way of resting; but the rest had consisted in marching straight to Kuan-cheng-tze, and thence back again to Mukden.

M'Cullagh, the correspondent of the *New York Herald*, suggested that I should go with him to General Mishenko's corps, to which he was attached. Each correspondent was attached to a separate corps, and in order to change your corps you had first to apply to the General Staff. It was possible, however, to pay a short visit to a corps without being officially appointed to it, if you did not wish to remain there permanently.

On September the 10th I started south for Sa-ho-pu with M'Cullagh and a company of the Chitinsky regiment of Cossacks. We bivouacked in a wood on the way, and arrived at Sa-ho-pu the next morning. We found General Mishenko living in the small fangtse with his staff: the same old story —horses in the yard, dirt in the house, heat and monotony. General Mishenko himself made a great impression on me. He seemed to be far more decisive and businesslike than most of the generals one met. As a man he was simple, and extremely

straightforward and amiable. His courage was proverbial.

On September 4th, M'Cullagh and I took up our abode as the guests of the Verchnioodinski regiment, and the same day the whole corps moved about two versts further south to a field, where we bivouacked in the open.

On September 13th, M'Cullagh woke me up early in the morning, and asked me if I would like to go on a reconnaissance. We started half-an-hour later with about forty Cossacks and two officers, and rode to a village on the banks of the Sha-ho. There the Chinese were asked the usual question :—

"Iben io-meyo?" "Japanese are, not are?" to which they generally answer No.

On this occasion they said there were some Japanese in a temple about a mile to the east. Our detachment divided itself into two sections, and I went with one of the officers and his men. We rode into a field of kowliang about 800 yards from the temple which had been indicated to us. There the men were placed in the kowliang, and told to fire on the temple. They fired a volley, and the Japanese answered with a volley a few minutes later. The bullets whistled over our heads. The Japanese were clearly visible on the temple hill with a glass, and without a glass for the non-short-sighted.

We remained there the rest of the day, not having obtained much more information than we had received

from the Chinese in the morning—namely, that on the temple hill there were a certain amount of Japanese.

In the evening we rode back to a village and slept, with horses saddled and everything ready for an alarm, there being nobody between us and the Japanese. The next morning we returned to the regiment. M'Cullagh and I rode back to Mukden that same day. It was necessary for me to obtain an official permission if I wished to remain in that corps.

I did not ask for the exchange, as I intended some day or other to find my Transbaikal battery. I stayed three days at Mukden, and on the 20th I started with Colonel Potapoff to pay a visit to General Kossagofsky's corps, which was on our extreme right flank near Sin-min-tin, forty versts from Mukden. We arrived at the first "etape" in the evening. "Etapes" are a sort of official post, in charge of an officer, consisting of one or two houses, placed at intervals on the main roads, so that travelling officers can pass the night in them.

The first etape was a place remarkable for the scrupulous cleanliness with which it was kept. This was so rare in Manchuria that it felt almost uncanny. Not only was it clean, but orderly and scrupulously organised to the smallest detail. One did not dare throw one's cigarette ashes on the floor. The towels had small labels over them, such

as: "This is for the hands"; "This is for the face." The commander of this etape was evidently a meticulous man.

We started at noon the next day for the next etape, and arrived there about five o'clock in the afternoon. Here we found quite a different order of things; an equally spacious and roomy house, but an atmosphere of extreme geniality and a most jovial host. We had dinner, enlivened by champagne bought from a German man of business who had come back from Newchang.

On the following evening, just as dinner had started on the terrace outside, and the soldiers were celebrating someone's birthday in the yard by singing a folk-song that has about seventy-five verses, just as champagne bottles were being opened, a whistle was heard, and the sergeant arrived and said, "Allow me to report that there is an alarm."

The songs stopped abruptly; the soldiers were formed up and marched off through the gate . . . but it was only a false alarm after all, and in twenty minutes' time they returned, still singing the continuation of the same song. The next day I saw General Kossagofsky, and he arranged that I should go to advanced posts, whither I started the next day with an escort of frontier guards.

I stayed a week in a village about twenty versts south with Colonel Kononovitch, who was in command of the cavalry division there. Those were

delicious days. The weather was perfect; a mild autumn haze pervaded the landscape, which in these parts was rich and woody; the kowliang had been reaped, and there was a subtle thrill in the air, a peculiar haze in the broad noondays there which made one think of autumn days in England; the leaves were not brown, and there were no signs of decay; but autumn made itself felt in the chilly dawns and the shortening evenings. I lived in the colonel's house; with him was an adjutant, who went out shooting every day with his retriever, just as if he had been in Russia. In the evening the officers used to play vindt.

Every morning detachments used to be sent out to reconnoitre, as this was the chief district of the Hun-hu-tses. The troops quartered here consisted of Cossacks of the Amur and frontier guards.

Outside our house there was a large square field enclosed by a wall. Beyond it was a wooded hill. Here the men were encamped, and lit their camp-fires in the evening and sang songs. One song they used to sing very often contains the following cheerful sentiment :—

"I don't drink honey,
I don't drink beer,
I drink sweet vodka made of cherries;
I don't drink out of a thimble-glass,
I don't drink out of beaker,
I drink out of half a pail."

As I used to lean over the wall watching them

cook their supper, they used to come and ask me questions, and often they offered me porridge made of buck-wheat, which was very good.

The kind of questions they asked were how far off England was; whether there were wolves in England; how bread was made there; how much wild ducks and horses cost in England; what the country looked like; whether we burnt coal or wood; whether there was military service? Once, when I had answered a whole string of similar questions to the best of my ability, the Cossack who was questioning me said, "In fact the English are white people, just like we are."

This same man explained to me the difference between the Siberian troops and the troops which were arriving from European Russia. "The Siberian troops," he said, "you see, are used to an accursed country like this, but when the Europeans arrive and see all these strange things it makes them timid" (robkii). I asked this man what he thought of the Japanese. He said they were a *ladni narod*, a people whom you could mix with easily, easy to get on with, and very brave; but he said in old times when people went to war the strongest side won, "but now it all depends on machines and ingeniousness. It's a great pity."

Great flights of wild duck used to fly over our village in the evening, and there was a great quantity of wild duck on a reedy lake hard by. Every

now and then we used to be startled by Hun-hutse atrocities. One poor man who was caught by them was frizzled to death by lighted spirits of wine in a small saucer. The Japanese were expected to attack on this flank, as they subsequently did in the battle of Mukden; but it never came to anything. After a time I began to think nothing would happen in this part of the world, and I resolved to go back to Mukden and try and find the battery and my friends once more. So one morning I started home again with an escort across the happy autumn fields down the Sin-min-tin road, which was crowded with innumerable Chinese carts, Pekin carts, pack mules, and foot passengers. I arrived at Mukden on October the 3rd, and at the railway station I met the veterinary surgeon of the 2nd Transbaikal Battery, who told me they had just arrived from Kuan-chen-tze, and were now encamped near the station.

At Mukden there was a great deal of movement and bustle. It was expected that General Kouropatkin would take the offensive. I resolved to rejoin the battery immediately.

CHAPTER IX

THE BATTLE OF SHA-HO

I FOUND the battery bivouacking between the station and the Chinese cemetery among the graves. There I found all my old friends; they had been right up to Kuan-chen-tze and some of them to Kharbin, and had returned provided with warm clothing. We dined in a small fangtse which was occupied by the colonel, who was still an invalid and lying in bed. After dinner we retired to pass the night under the trees, and very cold it was sleeping in flapping tents in the windy night and the misty dawn among the graves of forgotten dynasties.

On the 4th we moved into a temple and enjoyed two days of idyllic calm. The temple was inhabited by a Buddhist priest, and there was a little, tiny Chinese child about three years old, who used to run about the courtyard, and with whom I made friends. This child was afraid of nothing, not of boys, or horses, or men. But when he saw the Cossack on sentry-go with a drawn sword, he used to insist on being carried past him, saying, "Ping!" (which in Chinese means soldier) with an intonation

which proved he shared the mistrust and contempt of his countrymen for the profession of the fighting man. A fighting man in a Chinaman's estimation ranks beneath the hun-hu-tse or the hooligan; for whereas they fear the hun-hu-tse, their aversion for the soldier is mingled with contempt.

I enjoyed those two days of peace, there was something infinitely quiet and beautiful in that temple, with its enclosure of trees and grass bathed in the October sunshine. This delicious calm did not last very long. The battery belonged to the cavalry division of the 1st Siberian Corps, but this had already gone to the front, and our fate was still undetermined. For the time being we were in the reserve. We were expecting to receive orders to start at any moment. There had been no time to repair the guns, since the battery had only barely had time to march to Kuan-chen-tze and back again.

Kislitzki sat up all night of the 5th repairing the guns himself in the workshop of the artillery.

October 6th.—We received orders to start for the front and join the 1st European Corps, which formed part of the reserves. We started after luncheon on the 6th, and arrived in the evening at the village of San-lintze twelve versts south-east of Mukden. We passed the night in a fangtse, and out of doors it froze hard. The Chinese heated the k'angs, and the result was towards two in the morning I

felt that my head was frozen and my side roasted.

October 7th.—We moved early in the morning to another village three versts further on. There we were attached to the 7th regiment of Siberian Cossacks, commanded by Prince Troubetzkoi. A new officer joined us, a boy straight from college, Takmakov by name. Firing was heard that afternoon to the east, probably from where Rennenkampf was fighting. I went for a walk with Kislitzki, and he unfolded to me his views and ambitions. He was a student of Herbert Spencer and John Stewart Mill, and a lover of England, and owing to his love of tidiness and cleanliness used sometimes to be called an Anglo-maniac. That evening I shared a fangtse with him, as he always lived apart from the men; he could not stand pigging it with other people. He spent most of the night making some (to me) mysterious implements of wood, something to do with rectifying the angle of sight of the guns, and singing long passages of Lermontov's poem, *The Demon*, as he worked.

October 8.—A day of idleness, rain and inaction.

October 9.—Early in the morning we moved to the village of Sachetun, where we took possession of two small dilapidated houses. Towards evening we also heard the rattle of musketry. In front of us were the 4th, 17th and 10th corps; on the left flank the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd (commanded by General Stackel-

berg); and on the right the 5th. We were still in the peaceful reserve with the 1st European Corps, but the peace was not to last long. We were entertained that night at dinner by the 3rd Transbaikal battery, who were stationed in the same village. We heard the noise of firing all through the night. We sat down thirteen to dinner. A bad sign.

October 10.—A day of inaction at Sachetun. Artillery fire was audible all day long and in the night.

October 11.—We left Sachetun towards the afternoon, and proceeded to a village about a verst further south. Here I met Georges de la Salle, the correspondent of the *Agence Havas*, who had apparently been wandering between the two lines. We rested in the village about half an hour, and then received orders to proceed further south, and to put ourselves at the immediate disposition of General Kouropatkin.

We arrived at a village with an unpronounceable name, not far from General Kouropatkin's headquarters. We arrived at the village at sunset. The limited number of Chinese fangtses were all occupied, so we bivouacked in a field. There were only two tents among us, and most of us slept out on the ground. To the south of us was the first range of hills which continue straight on to Yantai, and among which a desperate battle was going on. We heard firing all night.

October 12.—Artillery fire began at half-past six o'clock, and from a kopje in front of our position, I got a splendid view of the fighting. To the east were successive ranges of brown, undulating hills, and to the west a plain black with little dots of infantry (the 1st European Corps). In this plain a Russian battery was engaged in an uninterrupted duel with a Japanese battery, and was receiving a hail of shells. They were under fire the whole day long; the Japanese had got the range, but I ascertained afterwards that their losses were insignificant although the fire had been so heavy. Their carts were smashed and some horses killed. In the extreme distance, to the south-west of the kopje on which I stood, were the hills of Yantai. On a higher hill, in front of that on which I was standing, the infantry was taking up its position, and the Japanese shrapnel was falling on it. The infantry retired and moved to the south-west, and it looked at first as if there was going to be a general retreat, but that was not the case.

The firing of the batteries continued uninterruptedly until ten minutes to seven o'clock in the evening. In the night it rained heavily, the noise of thunder mingling with that of the musketry. News of terrific fighting kept on arriving—a battery lost and a regiment cut up—and the wounded began to stream past our camp. There was another night of rifle fire.

October 13.—Again, punctually at half-past six in the morning, the artillery began once more. Early in the morning I went up on the kopje about a verst to the south of us. I watched the batteries firing and the Japanese shells falling constantly nearer to us. The infantry was entrenched in the hills, and to the west the Russian battery was firing in the position it had been the day before. On turning round I saw through my field-glass that our camp was astir. I ran back to it, and was met by a Cossack, my soldier servant, who was a Buriat, and worshipped only at the shrine of the Lama of Thibet. He was leading my pony, and as I mounted the animal, Japanese shells began to explode on the kopje where I had been standing. All the transports of the 1st Corps, which was camped next to us, began to move—it was about half-past eight in the morning—and we were expecting to start also, when we suddenly received orders to remain where we were. The Japanese shelling ceased for the time being. We remained practically alone in the field by the village. A little before one o'clock a regiment of the 1st Corps, which was in front of us, received orders to retreat.

At one o'clock in the afternoon it was said that the enemy was beginning to turn our right flank. We received orders to fire on the Japanese battery on the south-west, and to cover the retreat of the Russian field battery, which was between it and us.

At twenty minutes to three the battery went into action. The guns were masked behind the houses of the village, and Colonel Philemonoff, in order to get a good view, climbed up an exceedingly high tree which grew by the side of the houses. Knowing that he might at any moment be seized by a paroxysm of pain, my blood ran cold to see him do this. Not being able, however, to see sufficiently well from the tree he climbed down and moved up on to the slope of the hill. He began to give out the range, but after two shots had been fired he fell almost unconscious to the ground, and Kislitzki took over the command.

The Japanese answered with shells of shimosé. My attention was particularly attracted by the explosion of a shell on the slope. It seemed to me to have torn up a mass of kowliang or a portion of a tree, and to have scattered it into fragments. But when, at three o'clock, we left the position in order to fire further west, we saw that it was not kowliang or a piece of a tree that had been blown up, but a man. We took up our position on another and higher hill, and fired west at the furthest possible range on the Japanese infantry, which we could see moving in that direction against the horizon. The battery fired till sunset, the shrapnel falling in the exact position desired, and when we had finished the Inspector of Artillery of the 1st Corps, who had been looking on, complimented

the Commander, declaring that he had never seen more exact firing. He added that a Cossack battery was worth ten of his European batteries. He also made a speech to the men serving the guns, congratulating them on their good work, which began, "little children, little Cossacks." It was a simple and straightforward speech, and struck exactly the right note. At dusk we marched into a village; everywhere on these hills the infantry was stationed in trenches ready for the night attack. Some of the men had been killed by shells, and by a trench I saw two human hands.

October 14.—We were aroused at four o'clock in the morning by the noise of firing. I had got so used to hearing that peculiar ticking rattle that I awoke the moment I heard it, as if it had been an alarum set to call me. We moved out into the road and waited for the dawn. It was quite dark. The firing seemed to be close by. The Cossacks made a fire and cooked bits of meat on a stick. My Buriat soldier-servant was a great adept at that art, as in his country all meals are served in that fashion. At dawn Prince Troubetzkoi arrived with the news that the 17th and 10th Corps had repulsed the assault of the enemy, and that we were to join him later on in an attack. The commander went in search of a suitable position and I accompanied him. From a high hill we could see through a glass the Japanese infantry climbing up the kopje immediately

south of our former camp. The Japanese climbed the kopje, lay down, and fired on the Russian infantry to the east of them, the Russians being screened from our sight by another hill. Our battery was placed at the foot of the hill, and opened fire on the enemy's battery five versts to the south-west. The enemy replied from the east and the west with shrapnel and shell, and the situation seemed ugly. The battery was quickly extricated, however, and moved (the operation was excessively difficult as the field where the battery had received orders to be placed consisted of clotted earth) under heavy fire to a position on a hill further north. We fired thence on the enemy's battery which was five versts distant to the south-west.

Colonel Philemonoff, Kislitzki and I lay on the turf on the top of the hill. Kislitzki was giving the range, behind us on the slope of the hills were the guns. As we sat down a shell burst about two yards from the colonel; he grunted and moved about a yard to the left. The enemy were firing shrapnel and shimosé.

Our firing seemed to be extraordinarily accurate. One of the shells must have alighted on a Japanese ammunition cart, for during a second I saw a pillar of flame which I at first took to be a burning house, but it suddenly disappeared.

The battery went into action at 8 A.M. After we had been firing about an hour, the Japanese infantry

came round through the valley and occupied a kopje north-west of us, and opened fire first on our infantry which was beneath and before us, and then on the battery. The sergeant came and reported that men were being wounded and horses had been killed.

Takmakov, the boy Cossack, who had just arrived from eollege was shot through the chest, happily the wound was a slight one. A Cossack was shot through the head and went mad; another was seriously wounded. The Japanese infantry was stationed at a distance of 600 sajen from us, that is about 1200 yards. Then Hlebnikoff, one of the youngest of the officers belonging to the battery, (and perhaps the most conscientious), who was commanding a section, reversed three of the guns and fired on the infantry, giving the range himself.

This continued until noon. The Japanese were clearly visible, through a glass one could have recognised a friend. Their bullets whistled over our heads. At noon the infantry retired leaving us unprotected, and we were forced to retreat at full speed under heavy shrapnel and cross infantry fire. I was left without a pony and had to run, till a Cossack brought me a riderless horse, which I mounted with great difficulty as it had an extremely high saddle, and all the Cossack's belongings on its back. We retired to Sachetun, crossing the river Sha-ho, arrived there at 1 P.M. We had scarcely

halted ten minutes when we were ordered to move forward as an attack was to be made. Everybody was expecting a general retreat to Mukden. The stores at Sachetun were burning in great columns of flame. We thought we were being ordered merely to cover a retreat; but this was not so, as on the right flank the Russians had repulsed the Japanese attack, as we had been told in the morning. We went into action recrossing the river Sha-ho under heavy fire. It had begun to pour with rain. As we crossed the river one of our horses had the front of its face literally torn off by shrapnel. We took up a position on the further side of the river about thirty yards from the banks and fired due south.

The first few shots of the enemy were fired with great precision on to the battery. They then altered the range and their shells fell on the farther bank of the river. After we had fired for about twenty minutes, the enemy's fire ceased all along the line. Only two mountain batteries, and the Russians' east to the Japanese west continued firing. It was at this moment that the Japanese advance ceased all along the line, and we now know that the reason why it ceased was because they had run short of ammunition. Had they continued their advance at this moment we should probably have been forced to retreat to Mukden, and possibly to abandon Mukden also.

Kislitzki and I walked towards the south to see what was going on, and climbed up on the roof of an isolated cottage: we were almost killed for our pains by a stray shell which whizzed over our heads and exploded on the ground behind us. Then we returned and set out for a village to the south-west by a circuitous route across the river. Nobody knew the way. Nobody seemed to have heard of the village. We marched and marched until it grew dark. Some Cossacks and Chinese were sent to find out where the village was. We halted for an hour by a wet ploughed field. At last they returned and led us to our destination. We expected to find our transport there. I was nursing the hope that I should find dry clothing and hot food, as we were drenched to the skin and half dead with fatigue and hunger. When we arrived at the village I was alone with an officer; we dismounted at a bivouac and he went on ahead expecting me to follow him. I thought he was to come back and fetch me. I waited an hour; nobody came so I set out to find our quarters. The village was straggling and mazy. I went into house after house and only found strange faces. I returned to the bivouac and got one of our Cossacks to guide me: we spent another half hour in fruitless search. At last we found the house. I entered the fangtse and found all the officers; but no transport, no food, and no dry clothing.

The officer who had guided me said: "Why did you desert me?"

I threw my riding whip on the floor in a fit of exasperation and said: "It was you who left me."

Then they all laughed and one of them said, "We must shake hands with you, because this is the first time you have shown signs of discontent, before we thought you were superhumanly contented, but now we know you are human."

October 15th.—We spent in quiet and inaction.

I spent the night in the colonel's quarters and we discussed Russian literature, especially Dostoievski's novels, for which we both had a passion. He asked me which of the Russian novelists I preferred. I said Dostoievski and Gogol. "I think the same," he said, "but I am surprised at your thinking that; is it possible that a foreigner can appreciate the humour of Gogol?" I said that Englishmen would probably find it hard to believe that foreigners could appreciate the humour of Dickens. He said he had a passion for Dickens. The case then was analogous. We discussed Dostoievski's masterpiece, "The Brothers Karamazov"; the colonel greatly preferred the elder brother Dimitri, of the three brothers.

October 16th.—We received orders at dawn to be in readiness; a rumour arrived that the Japanese were in a village three versts off and we were prepared to retreat to Mukden. Half an hour later

we were ordered to join the 1st Siberian Corps, our proper corps, which had been sent south to attack.

We marched to a village called Nan-chin-tza, about three versts distant from the hill which the Russians call Poutiloff's Hill and the English Lonely Tree Hill. It had been taken in the night by the Japanese. We could see through a glass men walking on it now and then, but nobody knew whether they were Japanese or Russians. Two Cossacks were sent to ascertain the facts. Wounded men were returning one by one, and in bigger batches from every part of the field. It was a ghastly sight, and even worse than at Liaoyang. It was a brilliant sunshiny day and the wounded seemed to rise in a swarm from the earth. Their bandages were fresh and the blood was soaking through their shirts. The Cossacks returned saying the hill was occupied by the Japanese. We were told to join the 1st Corps. Here I met Commandant Chemineau, one of the French military attachés and Captain Schoenmeyer the Chilian attaché. We marched back a verst and found the corps bivouacking in the plains; all along the road we met crowds of wounded and mutilated men, carried on stretchers, and walking, their wounds quite fresh and streaming with blood. We halted ten minutes and then we were ordered to go into action. We marched a verst south again, the guns were placed behind a village about three versts to the

north of the hill to which General Poutiloff gave his name.

On the way we met General Poutiloff himself and the infantry going into action. The guns were placed in the plain behind a village. Colonel Philemonoff and I climbed up on the thatched roof of a small house, whence he gave his orders. He gave the range himself throughout the whole day. In front of us was a road; the house upon which we were seated was placed at the extreme right corner of the village; to the right of us was a field planted with some kind of green vegetable which looked like lettuce. Infantry kept marching along the wood on its way to action; a company halted by the field and began eating the lettuce. Our colonel shouted to them, "You had better make haste finishing the green stuff there, children, as I am going to open fire in a moment." They hurriedly made off as if it was upon them that fire was to be opened, save one, who, greedier than the rest, lingered a little behind the others, throwing furtive glances the while at the colonel, lest he should suddenly be fired upon. Soon after they had gone the battery opened fire; two other batteries were also shelling the hill, one from the east and one from the west. Orders were received to shell the hill until six o'clock and then to cease fire, as it was to be stormed. The enemy answered uninterruptedly with shrapnel, but not one of the

Japanese shells touched us, they all fell beyond us. After we had been firing some little while three belated men belonging to a line regiment walked down the road; our guns fired a salvo, upon which these men, startled out of their lives, crouched down in apprehension. The colonel, seeing this, shouted to them from the roof, "Crouch lower, or else you will be shot." They flung themselves on the road and grovelled in the dust, casting an imploring glance at the colonel. "Lower," he cried to them, "lower, can't you get under the earth?" They wriggled ineffectually, and lay sprawling about like big brown fish out of water. Then the colonel said: "You ought to be ashamed of yourselves; don't you know that my shells are falling three versts from here, be off with you!" As the sun set we ceased fire and waited. Soon a tremendous rattle of infantry told us the attack had begun. An officer subsequently described this fire as a "comb of fire" that seemed to tear the regiment to pieces. We waited in the dark, red, solemn twilight, and about an hour later a ringing cheer told us that the kopje had been taken. Someone who was with us remarked that it was just like manœuvres. But all was not over, as the Japanese attacked the kopje twice after it had been taken; it was partly taken but at what a cost we began presently to see.

It grew dark, and we sought and found a Chinese house wherein to pass the night. Men began to

arrive from the hill, and from their accounts it was difficult to tell whether the hill had been taken or not. With the officers was Glinka, the doctor of the battery. We had just laid ourselves down to rest when a wounded man arrived asking to be bandaged, then another and another. Many of the soldiers had received their preliminary attendance on the hill itself at the hands of the army surgeons and assistants, but the detachment of the Red Cross by which the wounded could be rebandaged was twelve versts distant. Soon our house was full of wounded, and more were arriving. They lay on the floor, on the k'angs, and in every available place. Light was the difficulty. We had only one candle and a small Chinese oil lamp, and the procession of human agony kept on increasing. The men had been badly wounded by bullet and bayonet, torn, mangled and soaked in blood. Some of them had broken limbs as well as wounds. Some had walked or crawled three miles from the hill, while others, unable to move, were carried on greatcoats slung on rifles. When one house was full we went to the next, and so on, till all the abodes up the street of the village were filled. Two of the officers bandaged the slightly wounded, while the doctor, with untiring energy and deftness, dealt with the severely injured. The appalling part of this business was that one had to turn out of the house by force men who were only slightly wounded,

or simply utterly exhausted and faint, so as to reserve all available space for the severely wounded. And even if you have not been severely wounded, yet after fighting for hours it is not an agreeable prospect to have to walk fifteen miles before there is any chance of getting food. Some of them merely implored to be allowed to rest a moment and to drink a cup of tea, and yet we were obliged ruthlessly to turn them from the door in view of the ever-increasing mass of agonising and mangled men who were arriving and crying out in their pain.

The Russian soldier, as a rule, bears his wounds with astounding fortitude, but the wounded of whom I am speaking were so terribly mangled that many of them were screaming in their agony. Two officers were brought in. "Don't bother about us, doctor," they said; "we shall be all right." We laid these two officers down on the k'ang. They seemed fairly comfortable; one of them said he felt cold; and the other that the calf of his leg tingled, "Would I mind rubbing it?" I lifted it as gently as I could, but it hurt him terribly, and then rubbed his leg, which he said gave him relief. "What are you?" he said, "an interpreter, or what?" (I had scarcely got on any clothes, what they were, were Chinese and covered with dirt.) I said I was a correspondent. He was about to give me something, whether it was a tip or a small present as a remembrance, I shall never know, for the other officer

stopped him and said, "No, no, you're mistaken." He then thanked me very much. Half an hour later he died. One seemed to be plunged into the lowest circle of the inferno of human pain. I met a man in the street who had crawled on all fours the whole way from the hill. The stretchers were all occupied. The manner in which the doctor dealt with the men was magnificent. He dominated the situation, encouraged every one, had the right answer, suppressed the unruly and cheered up those who needed cheering up.

The house was so crowded and the accommodation so scanty that it took a very short time to fill a house, and we were constantly moving from one house to another. The floor was, in every case, so densely packed with writhing bodies that one stumbled over them in the darkness. Some of the men were being sick from pain; others had faces which had no human semblance at all. Horrible as the sight was the piteousness of it was greater still. *Mentem mortalia tangunt.* The men were touching in their thankfulness for any little attention, and noble in the manner which they bore their sufferings.

We had tea and cigarettes for the wounded.

I was holding up one man who had been terribly mangled in the legs by a bayonet. The doctor was bandaging him. He screamed with pain. The doctor said the screaming upset him. I asked the

man to try not to scream and lit a cigarette and put it in his mouth. He immediately stopped, smoked and remained quite quiet—until his socks were taken off. The men do not generally have socks, their feet are swathed in a white kind of bandage. This man had socks, and when they were taken off he cried, saying he would never see them again. I promised to keep them for him and he said, "Thank you, my protector." A little later he died.

When we gave them tea and cigarettes they all made the sign of the Cross and thanked Heaven before thanking us.

One seemed to have before one the symbol of the whole suffering of the human race; men like bewildered children stricken by some unknown force, for some hidden inexplicable reason, crying out and sobbing in their anguish, yet accepting and not railing against their destiny, and grateful for the slightest alleviation and help to them in their distress.

We stayed till all the houses were occupied. At two o'clock in the morning a detachment of the Red Cross arrived, but its hands were full to overflowing. Then we went to snatch a little sleep. We had in the meantime received news that the hill had been taken and that at dawn the next day we were to proceed thither. With regard to the exact time and manner in which Lonely Tree Hill was taken, the accounts are conflicting.

Some people state that it was taken on the evening of the 16th between seven and nine o'clock; others that it was not finally taken until dawn of the 17th.

General Sacharoff's official report reads as follows :—"On the night of the 2nd-3rd (15th-16th) October the Japanese attacked in the centre the position occupied by two regiments on the so-called 'Lonely Tree Hill,' north-west of the village of Nan-chin-tza, and forced these regiments to cross the River Sha-ho. Strengthened by reserves, our forces, after preliminary artillery shelling, attacked and stormed the hill after stubborn resistance and drove the enemy back beyond the hill." He adds in a later telegram :—"The night of the 3rd-4th (16th-17th) passed off quietly in the storming of the hill of yesterday's date, the enemy occupied a strong position which had been hurriedly and insufficiently fortified by them . . . after an exceedingly successful artillery preparation, our troops took the whole position of the enemy and drove them back to a distance of two versts. Fighting continued until the morning of yesterday's date."

The night of the 3rd (16th), I spent, as I have said already, in the village of Nan-chin-tza, whither the wounded returned from the hill, saying it had been taken.

One of the officers of the battery rode to the hill, and it was suggested by the officer in command

there that the battery should at once move to the hill; this was not done as a night attack was expected. During that night neither I nor my companions heard a shot fired; but since it is stated in the official report that fighting continued until morning, I presume that this fighting took place two versts beyond the hill, five versts from us, in which case we would not have heard it.

We heard the infantry firing when the attack was made most distinctly, and it ceased about 9 P.M., or possibly before. In any case, the next morning, October 17, shortly after sunrise, we were on the top of the western corner of the hill itself and the battery was placed in position in the plain at the foot of the hill. If the hill had only just been taken at dawn, we must have heard the firing as we rode from the village to it. Therefore I am personally convinced that this part of the hill, at any rate, was taken the night before; and that the fighting in the night must have taken place beyond it; the record in the "archives" of the battery recorded the matter as I have related it.

Since writing this I have been informed from headquarters at Mukden that the version given above is correct. But I have also heard that there is still a great discussion as to when and by whom the hill was taken; the Petrovski regiment claim to have taken it early in the morning of the 17th October; whereas the infantry which was with

Poutiloff declare that they took it on the evening of the 16th. The fact is that the term Poutiloff Hill is vague; the hill was a great long place and adjoining it was another big hill, the Novgorod Hill; fighting may have gone on there, or beyond Poutiloff's Hill, all night. I only know three facts.

1. The hill was attacked between 7 and 9 P.M. The firing was as audible as anything could be; we heard cheering and we heard the fire cease.

2. We heard no firing during the night.

3. Early the next morning I was myself standing on the western extremity of the hill talking to General Poutiloff.

October 17.—At dawn we started for Poutiloff's Hill, trotting all the way. The road was covered with bandages; the dead were lying about here and there; but when we arrived at the hill itself the spectacle was appalling. I was the only foreigner who was allowed to visit the hill that day. As the colonel rode up the hill we passed a Japanese body which lay waxen and stiff on the side of the road and suddenly began to move. The hill itself was littered with corpses. Six hundred Japanese dead were buried that day, and I do not know how many Russians. The corpses lay there in the cold dawn with their white faces and staring eyes, like hateful wax-work figures.

Even death seemed to be robbed of its majesty, and to be bedraggled and made hideous by the

horrible fingers of war. But not entirely. Kislitzki, who was with me, pointed to a dead Japanese officer who was lying on his back, and told me to go and look at his expression. I did so; he was lying with his brown eyes wide open and smiling, showing his white teeth. But there was nothing grim or ghastly in that smile. It was miraculously beautiful; it was not that smile of inscrutable content which we see portrayed on certain wonderful statues of sleeping warriors, such as that of Gaston de Foix at Milan, or Guidarello Guidarelli at Ravenna, but a smile of radiant joy and surprise as if he had suddenly met with a friend for whom he had longed for above all things, at a moment when of all others he had needed him, but for whose arrival he had not even dared to hope. Not far off a Russian boy was lying, fair, and curly headed, with soft grey eyes, a young giant, with his head resting on one arm as if he had sunk like a tired child overcome with insuperable weariness, and had opened his eyes to pray to be left at peace just a little longer.

The trenches and the ground were littered with all the belongings of the Japanese; rifles, ammunition, bayonets, leather cases, field-glasses, scarlet socks, dark blue great coats, yellow caps, maps, paint brushes, tablets of Indian ink, soap, tooth-brushes, envelopes full of little black pills, innumerable note-books, and picture post-cards received and ready for

sending. Some of the Japanese dead wore crosses. One had a piece of green ribbon sewn on a little bag hanging round his neck. One had been shot through a written post-card which he wore next to his heart. So many men were buried that day, that the men were positively faint and nauseated by the work of burying the dead.

General Poutiloff was on the top of the western corner of the hill. There I remained with Colonel Philemonoff. The battery fired all day long; the Japanese fired on us, but their shells fell beyond the hill into the plain. One of our Cossacks was seriously wounded while he was eating his luncheon under the shelter of the hill in a trench, and this made me think of Napoleon's remark to a young soldier he saw ducking to avoid a shell.

"If that shell were meant to find you it would do so were you buried twenty leagues under the earth."

CHAPTER X

POUTILOFF'S HILL

AT the foot of the hill two or three Japanese prisoners sat round a fire, drinking tea with the Cossacks. Some wounded Japanese lay there covered up with coats and wraps, waiting for the ambulance, which arrived in the evening. The Japanese, though they suffered from the cold, seemed happy enough, with the exception of one who reminded me, by his proud and mournful expression, of a beautiful description of a caged eagle :—

> "Up to the hills he lifted longing eyes
> And waited for the help which never came;
> Too proud to wonder what had torn him thence,
> Too sad to mourn, too strong to be consoled."

During the day a touching incident occurred. A Japanese soldier surrendered, bringing with him his wounded brother whom he had not been able to carry back to the Japanese lines. He was convinced that in doing this he would be killed, since he related that the impression prevailed in the Japanese army that the Russians killed their prisoners.

During this first morning I had an opportunity of seeing what treatment the wounded and the prisoners received at the hands of the Cossacks. All day long the Cossacks busied themselves with the wounded, carrying them tenderly to safe and warm places—we were under intermittent fire all day—and bringing them food and cigarettes. If I had been a Japanese and wounded I would rather have walked into the hands of the Transbaikal Cossacks than into those of any of the other Russian troops here. The Transbaikal Cossacks especially are the most good-natured and long-suffering of men. I have seen them bullied by the Chinese, and yet they bear the exasperating treatment with the utmost forbearance. I have seen the Chinsse refuse them bread when they were hungry and fuel when they were cold, and other correspondents have been witnesses to this also, and I have longed to incite them to take what they wanted. That is an immoral sentiment engendered by war. I admire the Chinese beyond words, and they have my deepest sympathy, but I used to find that when one came into personal contact with them in plain matters such as food, lodging and fuel, they were enough to drive one mad by their relentless graspingness and greed. Moreover they always got the best of one unless one used physical force, which the competent authorities say is the greatest mistake one can commit.

POUTILOFF'S HILL

A French writer says somewhere, that in all times the Cossacks have been calumnied. There are, however, Cossacks and Cossacks, and Cossack is an excessively wide term, considering that it includes inhabitants of Transbaikalia as well as settlers on the banks of the river Don. Few people in Europe know what any kind of Cossack is. They may be worse in some ways than they are pictured; but they are different—very different from the popular conception of the Cossack.

The Cossacks were originally people who escaped, wandered or emigrated from Russia proper, in the thirteenth century, when there was no Russian Empire, but a kingdom of Moscow ruled over by a Muscovite Tsar. It is perhaps not superfluous to mention that there has never been such a thing as a Tsar of Russia or a Tsar of all the Russias, and that the term is incorrect unless used poetically; there were Tsars of Moscow. When Peter the Great created the Russian Empire he became Emperor (Imperator) of all the Russias; the present Emperor is Emperor of all the Russias, and Tsar of Astrakan and of the extra-Russian principalities in the same way as the King of England is Emperor of India.

Queen Victoria was very severe on diplomats who referred to the Emperor of Russia as the Tsar in their official despatches. To go back to the Cossacks. In the thirteenth century when the Tartars

invaded Russia, they pushed down to the south leaving a tract of deserted land between them and the kingdom of Moscow; thither, on the banks of the Don and the Dnieper, fugitives, wanderers and adventurers emigrated from the kingdom of Moscow and founded a colony and called themselves Cossacks. The present Cossacks are the descendants of these colonists. They own the land and have their own laws and administration, in return for which they are liable to military service under special conditions. They are obliged to furnish their own horses and equipment.

The Siberian and Transbaikal Cossacks are the descendants of settlers in Siberia and Transbaikalia, and form part of the same organisation; but as a race they differ greatly from the European Cossacks. The European Cossacks have the reputation of great brutality and cruelty. This is no doubt because they are employed by the government in suppressing riots and revolutionaries, which they do with the greater zest in that they do not consider themselves Russians but Cossacks. It is an insult to call a Cossack a soldier. He is not a soldier, but a Cossack. I had no experience of the European Cossacks; but I lived with extra-European Cossacks during the whole time I was in Manchuria; with the Siberian Cossacks, in General Samsonoff's division, with the Cossacks of the Amur, with the Transbaikal Cossacks and many others.

I found they were a delightful race of people, good-natured, long-suffering and ingenious. In fact, they very much resembled the Irish. They often told lies in a transparent childish manner. They quarrelled and abused each other but never came to blows. They were extraordinarily ingenious in finding food and making themselves and others comfortable by building houses and making stoves out of insufficient means.

If you told a Cossack to ride into a ford to see whether it was passable or whether one would be drowned in it, he would do so at once and not be drowned. They were far more effective individually than collectively. They were wonderful riders and lost without a horse. There are two proverbs about Cossacks which pleased me; one is "A Cossack will starve but his horse will have eaten his fill," and the other is "The Cossack's brother is Death."

I lived among these men all the time I was in Manchuria and had the opportunity of studying them closely.

They used, as I have already said, often to question me about England. When I answered their questions they generally used to say, "it's a country exactly like Russia and not like this place." Once during the Malacca incident a Cossack came up to me and said: "There is going to be a war with England," I said I thought not.

"Yes," he answered, "I read it in the newspapers. It's a pity—because Englishmen are civil; when I hold their horses at the station they give me a present. The Russians tell me to go to the Devil."

I often had opportunities of watching their dealings with the Japanese wounded, and their treatment of them was exactly what the *Times* described the Japanese treatment of the Russian prisoners and wounded as being; "namely that they treated them not only with mercy but with tenderness." I saw one Cossack sponging the face of a Japanese wounded man, as if he had been a nurse.

There is a sentence in the German official account of the war in South Africa which is refreshingly sensible. Talking of the alleged brutalities of the British troops the writer says that exceptional cases of brutality occurred as they must occur in every war on both sides, but that as a rule these stories were sheer fabrications, invented calumnies, and that the conduct of the soldiers had in general been above praise. The same thing is true of this war. There is no sort of bitterness between the combatants. The Russians are full of the greatest admiration for the Japanese. Exceptional cases of excess or brutality could no doubt be cited on both sides; but what an ungrateful and ugly task it is to rake up these stories and what a false impression it conveys; how unfair and unjust is this proceeding, considering that on both sides the behaviour of the troops

has been on the whole wonderfully good. A correspondent who returned to Mukden from Liaoyang since the Japanese occupation told me that the Japanese were full of praise of the Russians.

The Russians used always to say the Japanese were "molodtzi," which means "fine fellows," and is the greatest praise you can express in Russian.

The following is a story the truth of which I can vouch for. A Russian and a Japanese were found locked in a hand to hand struggle. The Japanese was taken prisoner and the Russian was severely wounded. The Russian refused to be taken to the ambulance unless the Japanese were taken with him; because the Russian said that it was "*his Japanese.*" They were put together in the same hospital train and the Russian refused to be separated from the Japanese and spent his time looking after him, and fanning his head and telling all visitors that it was "*his Japanese.*"

A Cossack officer in General Kossogovski's division, when I was dining in his regiment one evening, made us all nearly cry by his account of the way in which the Japanese fought and met death in front of one of the forts at Liaoyang. "Their officers are superior to us," he said, "more intelligent, more cultivated, and unsurpassably brave."

The soldiers said the same thing. The good-nature and unselfishness of the Transbaikal Cossacks

was never more noticeable than it was on the day we arrived at Poutiloff's Hill. For of their own accord the men went in search of the wounded, brought them to the fire and gave them tea and cigarettes and carried them themselves to the village, three versts off. The doctor was much struck by this and he begged me to notice it and to say something about it some time.

The night of our first day at Poutiloff's Hill was spent in the open. It rained, but the Cossacks, who display great ingenuity in making themselves at home, built me a small house out of kowliang in which I was quite comfortable. Infantry firing was heard quite close to us in the night.

The next day was the first of a series of monotonous and restless days. We were entrenched on the hill, and the enemy began to make entrenchments at a distance of three versts. There were two other batteries stationed near us. We fired but little, and the enemy shelled our position for about half an hour every day. We established ourselves in a broken-down "fangtze" at the foot of one end of the hill. There were no windows, and the doors had to be used for fuel. It was the first time during the war that I experienced real discomfort. The nights were piercingly cold. The "k'ang" was too short to permit one to lie on with comfort, while the dirt and

dust were distressingly abundant. Besides, it was neither work nor play. We were always on the alert. Almost every night we were aroused by infantry fire, while during the day we were disturbed by shells, and yet nothing interesting occurred. On the 20th of October, while we were quietly having luncheon behind a bank of earth on the summit of one side of the hill, the whole meal was spoilt by the explosion of five or six shimosé shells in our immediate vicinity, which filled the soup and the tea with dirt.

The days for the most part were spent in quiet and inaction, but generally towards the afternoon the enemy practised firing on us. Two or three times our "fangtze," which was supposed to be in a sheltered place, received a hail of shrapnel, and one of the orderlies was seriously wounded, and afterwards died. Sometimes a night attack used to be expected, and the battery remained in position all night. I thought I should like to experience what it was to sleep out by the guns. It proved to be infinitely more comfortable than our draughty and dismantled "fangtze." The Cossacks dug a house in the ground, and roofed it with kowliang, for the officers and myself to sleep in. They made a stove with bricks, so that one slept in comparative warmth until the fire went out. Towards one o'clock in the morning I became aware that my feet were frozen, and I sought the Cossacks' trench, where a wood fire was

kept alight all night long. There I fell into a delicious half-doze in front of the burning logs, while two Cossacks kept up a soft discussion on the causes of war and the attitude of the Great Powers towards Russia. From the east came the sound of infantry fire, and from the west, on the right flank, came the booming of guns, the noise lasting about two hours. I lay in my half-slumber, listening to the serious and simple reflections of the Cossacks, till the dawn sent a silver shiver over the sky, when I fell asleep until the Cossacks' soup-kitchens arrived at noon and soup was doled out.

A week passed in this way, without anything of any particular interest happening, and I therefore resolved to return to Mukden.

I left on the 30th October with Colonel Philemonoff, who had been ordered home to Russia by the doctors. He had been getting worse, and could scarcely move from his bed. In spite of this he would get up from time to time, and, muffled in cloaks, go up to the top of the hill in the bitter cold. He was an example of man's "unconquerable mind." And it was indeed bitter to him when he was at last forced to go and leave his men and the work, which was his life. I saw him say good-bye to the Cossacks. He made a short speech in a low voice, absolutely simple and unpretentious.

Then as he rode away he told me how he had lived with these men, and regarded them as his

children, and that it broke his heart to go away. He was a man of forbidding exterior, with a quiet, grim manner. He terrified some people out of their wits, but he was refined, cultivated, with a quiet sense of humour.

> "Lofty and sour to them that lov'd him not;
> But, to those men that sought him sweet as summer."

the embodiment of natural unaffected courage, and the men worshipped him.

I arrived at Mukden on the 31st of October, and the battery returned on the 4th of November to repair its guns. We established ourselves in our former quarters, the temple outside the city walls, whence we had started for the last battle.

In the meantime the autumn had come and gone. It was winter. There had been practically no autumn. A long summer and an Indian summer of warm hazy days, like the end of August and the beginning of September in England, without any rich, solemn effects of red foliage and falling leaves, touched with "universal tinge of sober gold." One day the trees were still green, and the next the verdure had vanished. The sunshine had been hot, and then suddenly the puddles in the yard froze; the sky became grey, the snow fell, and the wind cut like a knife.

To my mind Manchuria is infinitely more beautiful in its leafless state than in summer. When the kowliang is cut the hidden undulations

and delicate lines are revealed. It is a country of exquisite outlines. When one sees the rare trees, with their frail fretwork of branches standing out in dark and intricate patterns against the rosy haze of the wintry sunset, suffused and softened with innumerable particles of brown dust, one realises whence Chinese art drew its inspiration; one understands how the "cunning worker in Pekin" pricked on to porcelain the colours and designs which make Oriental china beautiful and precious.

After a few days the snow disappeared, and, although the nights remained bitterly cold, the days were bright and beautiful, crisp and dazzlingly clear, just as they are in Cairo during the winter.

I remained at Mukden until December the 1st, when I started for London.

CHAPTER XI

NOTES ON THE RUSSIAN ARMY

AS I have already said, the Russian private soldier seemed to me to afford the finest fighting material conceivable. In the first place, he is indifferent to death; in the second place, he will fight as long as he is told to do so; thirdly, he will endure any amount of hardships and privations good-naturedly and without complaining. It is often said that the Russian soldier is admirable on the defensive and when qualities of endurance are needed, but that he is no good on the offensive. I believe this is a catch-word which has no foundation in fact. I believe the truth to be that the Russian soldier will go anywhere and do anything, only that the amount of dash of which he will be capable will depend on the amount of dash with which he is led. That Russian infantry is capable of doing marvels under inspired direction was proved to the world in 1799 by the campaign of Suvorow, but since Suvorow Russia has not had an inspired leader of genius.

Skobelieff was a dashing soldier, but he had not the Napoleonic rapidity of conception and action as

Suvorow had; and it needs something more than dash to handle an army, as a great musician handles a musical instrument.

In this war, with the exception of General Kondratchenko, the defender of Port Arthur, there has been no instance of any such inspired and inspiring generalship. General Mishenko was an energetic leader, but, being a cavalry leader, and the opportunities for effective cavalry work being limited by the nature of the country, has had but comparatively small scope for the exercising of his talents. A still more capable general to my mind was General Samsonoff, who also suffered from lack of opportunity but never did anything badly. From the commander-in-chief downwards the principal fault in the Russian command seems to be a lack of initiative; the generals shrink from taking the responsibility, and lose time and opportunity by referring decisions to the Commander-in-Chief. As to the spirit which animates the soldiers, they have, in the first place, no sort of idea of what the war is about; they think that Manchuria is a country unfit for white men, and they have only one desire, and that is to go home. Every soldier who ever spoke to me asked me how long the war was going to last, and whether there was any chance of peace being declared.

I said to one who had asked me this usual question: "The winter is coming on, and it will be

a time of hardships." He answered: "It's not the winter we mind, we're used to the cold; but we want to go home to our wives and children."

The European soldiers felt this way more than the Siberians, who felt more at home in Manchuria.

I do not think that this manner of looking at the campaign has any great result on their fighting. They fight because they have been told to do so for the Emperor; it is inconceivable to them that Manchuria should be the object of the fighting, as they do not think a sane man would waste a thought—still less the life of a Cossack—on such a country.

I am told our troops used to say the same thing in South Africa. Colonel Goedke also told me that in 1870 officers and men, although they were victorious and in France, after six months' campaigning, were utterly sick of the war.

A soldier one day said to me that he wondered how the Chinese could be so patient considering that their crops were destroyed and their houses burnt. "Fancy," he said, "if that happened in our country." This made me think that the spirit of the Russian soldier would be very different if he thought he was fighting for anything remotely connected with Russia.

An officer said to me that you could do anything with Russian soldiers if you could kindle their *amour propre*, and that once done they would be

more formidable in an attack than on the defensive. This is equivalent to saying that what is needed is capable and inspired direction. In this war they have been from the very beginning trained to retreat and to consider the fact of retreating as the one natural event. Such a state of things cannot but have a bad effect on the morale of the men.

That the infantry can attack with dash was proved by the way they stormed Lonely Tree Hill under a perfect hail of bullets.

A great deal has been written and is still written daily about the hardships the Russians are enduring owing to their being without food and winter clothing. This is mere fancy. The soldiers have a plentiful supply of meat and are probably, as far as feeding goes, better off at the front than they are in barracks. When food has been scarce it has been owing, not to lack of supply, but to impossibility of distributing food during a fight or a forced march. It is also true that regiments occupying villages at the outlying positions have often been without bread and sugar, and have sometimes been reduced to biscuits. But the fact which nobody seems to grasp here is that it is possible to live on the country, and even if the men were reduced to feeding as the Chinese peasants do, on millet and beans, they would not starve.

As to warm clothing—by the middle of December

the whole army was provided with thick coats reaching to the knees and lined with sheepskin, fur caps and felt boots. In the month of October, before the cold had begun, officers were sent from every regiment to Kharbin in order to bring back warm clothes for their men. Besides the thick overcoats (poloushoubki) the men had shirts made of a soft woollen stuff like a blanket. It is the more discontented of the "intellectuals" in St Petersburg and Moscow who are responsible for the reports about the wretched insufficiency of the men's clothing; and they are then magnified by our daily press. If lack of initiative is the most crying defect of the Russian army, lack of proper organisation is the second fault. Just as in the civil administration of Russia disastrous results are obtained by the utter lack of cohesion and complete disconnection between one department and another, so in the army there is a deplorable want of connection between the various parts.

As to the strategy and tactics, the competent authorities seem to agree that there has been no very brilliant display of strategy on either side; and that the war in this respect has been almost pre-Napoleonic.

In the case of General Kouropatkin, the question is obscured by the fact that it is not known how far he was hampered by the civil element at the beginning of the war.

One very competent authority told me that he considered that at the beginning of the war General Kouropatkin had a perfectly clear idea of what he could do and what he could not do; but that as far as his actual tactics went they were thoroughly old-fashioned, and showed no advance on the tactics employed by the Russian army in the war of 1877 against the Turks.

Want of initiative was the fault generally imputed to him—want of decision and of a far-reaching outlook.

On the other hand, it cannot be said that the army had lost faith in him. Officers often said that he was a Berthier and not a Napoleon; and it was universally admitted that he was a good organiser, a thoroughly competent man; personally brave, simple and unassuming; but as an organiser he had a great deal too much to do.

A great deal has been made in the press about the boasts which General Kouropatkin was alleged to have made when he started for Manchuria. There is not a shadow of foundation for these statements. Never did a general go to a war in a less boasting frame of mind. In fact, he said that it would be quite impossible to win a victory at the initial stage of the war, and never advocated the advance south.

To reform the system, which is at the root of the evils from which the Russian army suffers,

would need a man of colossal genius; since some of its most crying faults are inherent in the Russian national character. For instance, the laxity of discipline. It is not that the men are disobedient, but that the officers do not take the trouble to see that their orders are properly executed. They are inclined to let things slide, and to put off things to the next day. Another fact in connection with this is that it is impossible to force Russian soldiers, Russian peasants, or Russians of any kind to do things in any but their own way. If they kill a sheep in a particular way they will go on killing it in that way. It is no good bringing them a modern invention twice as practical, which will save them a great deal of time and trouble; they will pay no attention to it, and go on in their old fashion. You will meet with a passive, smiling, and good-natured resistance, against which nothing can prevail. They are extremely unpractical, and at the same time not entirely unpractical; they often muddle through; for instance, the trains used to arrive; new troops used to arrive; the transport used to arrive, and one wondered how this was done, considering the confusion and the happy-go-lucky fashion in which everything connected with these matters seemed to be.

If a general took energetic measures to see that his orders were carried out literally and promptly

he incurred unpopularity. The officers under him resented being worried. It was in these very matters that the Japanese showed themselves so superior to the Russians, namely, in their organisation and in their discipline.

In one of the points in which the Russians are infinitely superior to the Japanese—namely, their cavalry—the superiority was, if not nullified, at least lessened by the fact that the country was singularly unsuited for the use of cavalry; moreover, the Cossacks, as a fighting weapon, are in a certain degree antiquated. They ride, as indeed is the case with all Russians, quite beautifully; they lose all their heaviness and awkwardness on horseback, and become one with the horse, and give one the impression of centaurs; but the time has gone by, or at least it certainly did not present itself in this war, when a cavalry charge of men equipped with a huge, thick lance is of any great advantage. Mounted infantry would have been invaluable; but the shooting of the Cossacks was bad; it was not what they were accustomed to do. The Cossacks, and especially those from the Caucasus, expected charges with bare sabres, and this did not occur. The Cossacks were useful in keeping up the communication between the various parts of the army.

The Japanese used their cavalry extremely little and never unsupported by infantry; unlike the Chinese, they have no notion of riding.

Where the Russians were superior was probably in the accuracy of their artillery fire and in the actual quality of their guns. The firing of the artillery of the Siberian army was quite admirable, and the officers of all the Siberian batteries were highly instructed and exceedingly capable officers.

To sum up, I should say that the faults of the army are to be attributed far more to the defectiveness of the general system and the absence of inspired direction than to the deficiencies of the officers as a class. The officers, though they varied greatly in kind, were brave men who did their duty well, and it was not surely their fault that the strategy was misguided and the tactics old-fashioned. One minor point which is a part of the Russian system, and is perhaps worth mentioning, is the wholesale distribution of decorations, varying in every conceivable shade both in kind and degree. The effect this has is deplorable, since anyone who omits to receive a decoration is almost a marked man. Besides this it produces a greed for decorations, till at last people think of that to the exclusion of everything else.

Want of direction and lack of cohesion seem to me the two crying faults, and the faults by which the Japanese gained the most; in fact, a soldier on my return home summed up the whole situation by saying to me, "If the authorities at the top of the ladder were anything like as good as the

men at the bottom, the result would be very different."

Another remark which also summed up the whole war I heard made the Christmas before last by an Englishman, before the war began: "If there is a war," he said, "I am sure the Japanese army will have every kind of modern equipment, while the Russian army will be in the same state as it was in the days of Peter the Great." If one substitutes 1877 for Peter the Great the remark is literally true. The Russian army and all its methods is thoroughly old-fashioned.

The Russian military authorities refused to pay attention to the war in South Africa because they said it was too small to be worth considering. The lessons of that war, which were many and various, were consequently lost upon them. The result is that their whole system is old-fashioned. The strategy was old-fashioned, the tactics old-fashioned, the Cossacks as a weapon are utterly antiquated, and far more fit to fight at the battle of Agincourt than at the present day. Above all things the training of the infantry soldier is old-fashioned, since he is trained practically to fight exclusively with the bayonet. It was only at a late stage during the war that perpetual volley-firing was discouraged. His bayonet remains fixed on his rifle when he fires; in fact the possibilities of the modern rifle do not seem to have been even taken into considera-

tion. On the other hand, the artillery firing was, as I said before, good. The reason is that the artillery officers in Russia receive an infinitely better training than the rest of the army; but even in this branch there are strange deficiencies—an absence of good field-glasses, of telescopes and range-finders. In the battery to which I was attached no range-finder was used. There happened to be two officers who were exceptionally gifted, and had a talent of judging distance which was marvellous; but such men seldom occur. I heard a German critic find fault with another thing, which was that the Commander-in-Chief, after he had given orders to the commander of a corps to do a definite thing, interfered as to the way in which it was to be done. This violation of what he called the *gliederung* (the structure) of the army was, according to German ideas, the worst fault which it was possible to commit.

However, in spite of all these shortcomings, it is probable that the Russian army is underrated as a fighting machine and as a whole. To say that all the officers are rotten is an absurdity. There are many line officers whose duties were insignificant, and whose scope of action was narrowly limited, who I am convinced would have been capable of doing effectual if not great work. The great vice is the system, and the system is the direct result of the bureaucratic system of govern-

ment, which can only produce a state of moral slavery. Next to that, the greatest deficiency was a lack of generals, a lack which has been felt by many nations at many and various epochs, ancient and modern, from the days of Xerxes to the days of Macmahon and Kruger—a lack which is by no means a Russian idiosyncrasy.

CHAPTER XII

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

IF I were asked my main impression as to the Russian army, I should answer that the army was good but the system was bad. Which is equivalent to saying what a Russian officer said to me during my journey home: namely, that the Russian people were good fellows, but the Government, *i.e.* the bureaucracy, was damnable; but that is a question which is beyond the scope of this little book. *Non nostrum.* The same idea appears to be occurring to the whole Russian nation at this moment.

There is one question which I should like to allude to, and that is the attitude of Russians towards England. I found it to be universally exactly the same as the attitude of the English towards Russia: namely, that the Russians like the English individually, and get on well with them, but they consider England's policy to be one of subtle, far-reaching, unscrupulous Machiavellian encroachment. One very intelligent officer said to me, "I admire, respect, and delight in individual Englishmen, but I hate the policy of England with all my heart and soul."

I asked him in what it differed from the policy of Russia, and told him that was exactly the opinion of some of my countrymen with regard to his country. There is nothing very new or startling about such a point of view. It is shared by every European nation with regard to Great Britain; by large countries like Germany, by small countries like Denmark, by friendly countries like Italy. In a certain sense it is a compliment, as it testifies to the success of our policy.

In some degree I think the tone of our press is responsible for this, the patronising and canting tone with which we deal with the follies and vices of our neighbours, as if nothing regrettable of any kind or sort could by any possible manner of means happen in England. An instance of this was the attitude which our press adopted towards France during the Dreyfus case, which was so highly successful in exasperating that high-spirited and sensitive nation. Happily all that is forgotten; the relations of nations shift and change as quickly as those of individuals, and out of the bitterness came the *entente*. But our attitude towards Russia is similar now to what it was then towards France. One can understand a policy of definite hostility. "If we really feel all this," one says to oneself, "why not go to war?" But the question is: "Do we really feel all this?"

But if we do not mean to go to war, what is the use

of slander and pin-pricks? When foreigners talk about the egoism of England and her egotistic policy, I always reply, "Of course our policy is egotistic, and based upon egoism; but will you show me the nation whose policy is based upon altruism?" The French sometimes talk about the Italian campaign of Solferino as an altruistic war; but Napoleon III. can hardly be said at that moment to have been a disinterested spectator in European politics.

With regard to the policy of England, another officer, a Cossack, said to me that England and Russia had no conflicting interests, that the question of India was to Russia a fairy tale for the childish, but that in spite of this it was impossible to get on with the English as a nation, because they never let the Russians alone, it was a question of pin-pricks on every side. "It is always a question," he said, "of barking and not biting; in fact neither the one thing nor the other, neither definite hostility nor open friendliness, but a series of small vexatious actions leading to nothing except vague bad feeling." The reply to this, I suppose, is that English people say exactly the same thing about the Russians, and that it is based upon the fear of India being invaded.

Several officers said to me that they cherished the dream of an invasion of India, but I generally noticed the truth of the saying that Russian officers below the rank of a colonel think an invasion of India an exalted ideal, a possible object and a

desirable ambition, whereas all officers above the rank of colonel regard it as an absurdity, undesirable if not impossible. In connection with this one officer made the following remark to one of the English correspondents, "We Russians cannot fight on sea or in mountains." "Then you can never take India," was the correspondent's answer. In thinking of this we should remember the fact that the Russians if left to themselves are essentially a peaceable and peace-loving nation; if they have been landed in a war, as in this case with Japan, it is an obvious fact that the Russian nation at large had nothing to do with it; it is as if England, to take a manifestly impossible hypothesis, had been landed in an unpopular Colonial war by the High Commissioner of South Africa or the late Mr Rhodes. It is also obvious that the war received no moral support from the people such as even unpopular wars sometimes receive; the Russian people felt that it had been made over their heads entirely. At the beginning of the war there was, after the first attack on Port Arthur, a considerable amount of popular feeling even among the intellectual classes, owing to the fact that they felt that Russia had been humiliated, and that although the war was a gigantic mistake it must be gone through with; but this feeling soon died away, overwhelmed by the ever-increasing wave of disgust which swept over the nation and is now so clearly manifest.

The feeling among the army when I left the front was that if Port Arthur fell peace should be made, that irretrievable mistakes had been committed, that the war was fundamentally iniquitous; that the Japanese were an admirable people, enlightened and putting so-called civilisation to shame. I hear that this feeling developed to extraordinary degree after the battle of Sandepu; and now after the battle of Mukden it must be stronger still. The feeling in the army was that what Russia wants is peace and internal progress and the development of her immense home resources, the opening and development of Siberia for instance, and not aggression abroad. If such a feeling obtains in the army how much stronger must it be in Russia itself.

Of course there are Jingoes who would be capable of suggesting a campaign against Germany or India as a possible remedy; but such people are not to be taken seriously; we have similar people here, and should "rate them at their true value." It may be objected that Jingoes in Russia occupy sometimes exalted and influential positions. This is true, but the result of their action has just been put to the test, and the answer of the nation has been made first by protest and then by dynamite; it is therefore difficult to believe that Jingoes, however exalted, however fanatical, however misguided, however invincibly ignorant, obstinate, short-sighted and

retrograde, will venture once more on a policy which is received with such emphatic disapprobation; the people want peace, the army want peace, the intellectual classes want peace; it is to be supposed therefore that they will end by getting it, and that an era of a different kind of peace may possibly begin for Russia, a peace unthreatened, by the results of a system which would have suited the days of the Comte D'Artois and of Louis XV., but which is strangely discordant with the modern world.*

Another thing which I had long ago guessed became to me during the course of the war an absolute certainty. We regard Russia as they regard us, as a far-seeing, subtle, designing, plotting, unscrupulous and Machiavellian Mephistophelian force. Our policy is more remarkable for the good luck which has attended it than for the foresight with which it is framed. A statesman once said that when people ask what England's policy will be about such and such a point, they embarrass the ministers and the permanent officials because there generally is no policy. This is the case with Russia: what we take for subtle Machiavellian delays, extended procrastination, ambiguous temporisation and calculated prevarication is simply the result of sheer incompetence;

* Of course there may be a revulsion of popular feeling at any moment. Something might occur which would lead the people to back up the war, in which case it may continue for years.

utter disorganisation, and the slipshod, slovenly, happy-go-lucky muddle arising from the fact of a country being governed by a decentralised bureaucracy, the bureaucrats of which are Slavs, and have the Slav temperament. Very often the policy of putting off, of temporising, of inaction, of lying on your back and vaguely kicking has the most effectual results. It takes in the whole world; and when it is successful the world says, "What a magnificent bluff!" but the bluff is an unconscious one. The men are not competent enough to know they are bluffing. Surely this war has or ought to have revealed the matter to the whole world. The manner in which Manchuria was occupied, the way in which the negotiations were carried on, the outbreak and conduct of the war—all these things show that there was no guiding idea, no fixed policy, no organisation, no harmony between the officials in the Far East and the officials in St Petersburg, and above all things no foresight. The idea of far-seeing, far-reaching Russian policy should by the mere fact of this war be exploded for ever. Russian policy has up to now been the fortunate or unfortunate result of a mere chaos of conflicting elements in which no guiding mind has ever been able to preponderate or to permeate.

But enough of politics, which are not the subject of this book. I wish to end by a brighter side of things. As the officer said to me, the Government

may be damnable but the people are good. And that is a thing which Englishmen know little or nothing about. Some people read French translations of Russian novelists, but it never occurs to them that these novels are the reflection and shadow of a mightier thing, which is the Russian people. Nations like the Chinese and the Russians should not be judged by their governments, but by the noblest fruits of their men of genius, or by any Russian or Chinese peasant.

A Russian with whom I conversed on the way to the war at Moscow on various topics (he was from the Baltic provinces and therefore far from being Chauvinist) said to me that whereas in Great Britain excellent books were published almost daily about Japan and Japanese affairs the British people were informed to a ludicrously insufficient extent about Russian affairs, and not only as far as the war was concerned but about Russia and the Russian people in general. "Your travellers," he said, "go in thirteen days from Moscow to Port Arthur and then write a book called 'A Rush Through Russia.' They do not know the language, and the result cannot be altogether satisfactory." I told him that translations of Russian literature were very popular in Great Britain. "That is perfectly true," he answered. "The British know some of our novelists very well, though our most characteristic author, Gogol, our Dickens—Dickens

with a blend of Stevenson and Edgar Allan Poe—is quite unknown to them, and our poets, Poushkin, Lermontoff, and Alexis Tolstoi are not even translated; but it has never occurred to the British that our literature is in any way a reflection of our national life. They consider the masterpieces of Tolstoi, Tourgenieff, and Dostoievsky like airy soap-bubbles, which have proceeded by chance from the brains of certain cosmopolitan men of letters. They do not take their idea of Russia from our literature, but from their descriptions of Russians in English fiction. They judge us not according to the portraiture of Tourgenieff but according to that of Merriman, the author of the 'Sowers,' an excellent novel, which I read with delight, but which gives about as accurate a picture of Russian life as Georges Ohnet would give of British society." "Let me give you another instance," he proceeded. "Foreigners imagine when they come to Russia that the whole population of our country consists of Tartars; the Tartar type, with slit eyes and a snub nose, whereas, as you know, a Tartar in the streets of Moscow attracts attention as something exceptional, in the same way as an Irish peasant woman in her national dress would in London. Foreigners are surprised to find that Russians belong to the Aryan race."

Another Russian said to me that Russia was the great unknown quantity to Great Britain, the big X,

and that in consequence of this ignorance on the part of the British their trade suffered considerably, while Germany, whose commercial travellers spare neither time nor trouble in studying Russia, its language, and its customs, gained enormously. The British Consul at Moscow confirmed this fact to me, and told me that he had even received letters from business firms alluding to the "Port of Moscow." All Englishmen whom I have seen, who have lived long in Russia, and know the language and the people, have said to me the same thing, namely, that the Russians are fine fellows, and that the English ought to get to know them because they would like them, and that what people say about Russians in England is nonsense and cant. Dr Westwater, the missionary doctor at Liaoyang, who had worked with the Russians, and, from his long residence in China, had had every opportunity of seeing both sides of the medal, said exactly the same thing to me. It has been said to me by every British man of business I have met in Russia.

As to the war I shall be satisfied if there is a single sentence in this book which will have brought home to anyone the unalterable horror, misery, pain, and suffering which is caused by a modern war—anything which will make people reflect when, or rather before, they beat the big drum and appeal to St Jingo.

War is an insensate abomination, and the only

redeeming feature in it seems to me the sparks it knocks out of the human character, apart from the actual courage displayed, and the deeds of heroism which are done.

War seemed to me to be like the palace of truth, to act as a touchstone on men's characters; it revealed many vices, follies and failures, weaknesses, the meanest and smallest sides of human nature; but also in the other scale of the balance, and surely the balance is weighed down on this side, many noble things and innumerable small forgotten acts which were beautiful, and among these perhaps the most precious are the unexpected surprises in men, the "self-sacrifice of the indifferent, the unworldliness of the worldly, the unselfishness of the selfish."

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
GENERAL LITERATURE,	2-20
ANTIQUARY'S BOOKS,	20
BEGINNER'S BOOKS,	20
BUSINESS BOOKS,	20
BYZANTINE TEXTS,	21
CHURCHMAN'S BIBLE,	21
CHURCHMAN'S LIBRARY,	21
CLASSICAL TRANSLATIONS,	22
COMMERCIAL SERIES,	22
CONNOISSEUR'S LIBRARY,	23
LIBRARY OF DEVOTION,	23
ILLUSTRATED POCKET LIBRARY OF PLAIN AND COLOURED BOOKS,	23
JUNIOR EXAMINATION SERIES,	25
METHUEN'S JUNIOR SCHOOL-BOOKS,	25
LEADERS OF RELIGION,	26
LITTLE BLUE BOOKS,	26
LITTLE BOOKS ON ART,	26
LITTLE GALLERIES,	26
LITTLE GUIDES,	27
LITTLE LIBRARY,	27
METHUEN'S MINIATURE LIBRARY,	28
OXFORD BIOGRAPHIES,	28
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FICTION,	32-40
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